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## Principal Preparation for The Bahamas: A Partnership Approach

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Principal Preparation for The Bahamas: A Partnership Approach

by

Raquel R. Edgecombe

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Leadership  
Department of Leadership, Policy and Lifelong Learning  
College of Education  
University of South Florida

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to the people of my country, The Commonwealth of The Bahamas. I truly believe the contents herein will help to advance our people through the vehicle of education. Further, I dedicate this work in memory of my maternal grandmother, the late Ethral Phobe Higgs Cooper and my brother, the late Herbert Romell Barr. Thank you both for always believing in me.

I also dedicate this work to my loving husband Kevin Edgecombe, and our wonderful children: Kevin Jr (KC), Kelli, and Kristen. You all have truly supported me and pushed me on this journey. To my mother, Valerie Barr, you are the best! No words can describe your worth.

Finally, this work is dedicated to my Lord and personal savior Jesus, Christ. Thank you for giving me wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. I also thank you for all the people you have sent along this journey who have contributed to my success. Thank you!

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## **ABSTRACT**

Current literature has investigated university-district partnerships in numerous ways; however, based on a review of the literature, no study has sought the insights of potential partners about the partnership arrangement prior to the start of the partnership agreement. The purpose of this study was to explore educational leadership practitioners' understandings of partnership in principal preparation. This inquiry was guided by the following research questions: (a) How do educational stakeholders perceive the ideal partnership arrangement for the preparation of principals; and (b) In what ways do the perspectives of educational stakeholders reflect broader discourse about the quality of educational leadership preparation? A typology of partnerships for promoting innovation was employed as the conceptual framework for this study. The data generation methods included virtual interviews and a focus group with principals. This study will add to the literature on the role of partnership in educational leadership. The practitioners' understood: (a) The preparation program/training would be best facilitated through a partnership; (b) Oral and written communication is vital to the establishment of the partnership; (c) The partnership should be representative of the people it will serve; and (d) Partners can achieve successes and overcome challenges when they collaborate and communicate. Implications for developing collaborative partnerships in the Bahamas are discussed and a recommendation for future research which focuses on the preparation of school administrators in all settings throughout the Bahamas is provided.

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter I briefly discuss the importance of principal preparation and the benefits of preparing principals via the vehicle of university-district partnerships. I detail the principalship and principal preparation in selected countries, namely, the United States of America, and The Commonwealth of The Bahamas, my country of origin. Further, I detail the statement of the problem, the purpose of the research, the research questions, the rationale of the study, background of the study, and my positionality and background as the researcher. Before concluding this chapter, I will also discuss the conceptual framework used to guide this study, provide an overview of the study and its anticipated outcomes, as well as a list of important terminologies used in this study.

Research suggests that principals play a pivotal role in student achievement and learning “by influencing those with more direct interactions with students, primarily their teachers” (Hallam et al., 2010, p. 5). The principal’s role as an instructional leader, is only one of numerous roles; the principal is the chief executive officer of the school, the building manager, the mentor, coach, and in some jurisdictions, a classroom teacher (Borden et al., 2012). Some principals prepare for these roles by enrolling in preparation programs which are often facilitated through a university-district partnership.

Principal preparation has gained much attention over the past two decades in countries such as the United States of America (USA), Canada, and England. In the USA for example, there has been an ongoing call for university-district partnerships in the preparation of principals.

The benefits of such partnerships in principal preparation has been widely documented.

According to the Wallace Foundation (2016) report which synthesized five major findings from the reports of four educational leadership experts in the field (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, American Institutes for Research, The School Superintendents Association, and University Council for Educational Administration):

... university-district collaboration is important to effective principal preparation.

When they work with districts, programs can better harmonize their offerings with district needs and better serve their customer. Further, lack of collaboration hinders programs from providing learning opportunities cited in research as important, such as clinical experiences. (Mendels, 2016, p. 8)

Similarly, other scholars in the field and education stakeholders, namely government officials agree university-district partnerships are a vital piece of the school leadership preparation puzzle. Borden et al. (2012) called for “an educational structure that fosters significant partnerships between schools, communities, and the university” (p. 126). Davis et al. (2005) listed university-district partnerships as one of the seven key characteristics of effective leadership programs in general. Likewise, Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) in their study of exemplary school leadership preparation programs, found that one of the main qualities of these programs is the existence of positive university-district partnerships. They posit: “The programs we studied were distinguished by the willingness of central actors in both districts and universities to facilitate cross-sector collaborations” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007, p. 16). At a micro-level, Grogan et al. (2009), concur that the effectiveness of university preparation programs is dependent upon university-school partnerships.

The purpose of this study was to explore how practitioners/stakeholders understand the role of partnerships in the development of principal preparation programs. The literature has investigated partnerships in numerous ways; however, based on a review of the literature, no study has sought the insights of potential stakeholders about the partnership. Specifically, this study addressed the university- ministry of education partnerships, an approach which according to this review of the literature, has not been studied. This study addressed these concerns.

### **University-District Partnerships Explained**

The idea of the university-district partnership is most dominant in the US context. Therefore, this section will primarily address this phenomenon by providing background and citing examples for the call for this approach from this context. American based scholars have done a thorough job of providing examples of university-district partnerships, the nature of such partnerships, and the importance thereof. However, the study of the definition of this phenomenon is lacking in the literature. One detailed attempt in the literature offered by Osguthorpe et al. (1995) who explains that a university-district partnership is created when a university and district partner forms a tightly structured relationship. They posit, partnerships are an active collaboration, which only develops after individuals connect and nurture relationships founded upon equity, trust, and a commitment to achieve shared goals.

### **Contextual Background in the US**

The educational landscape in the United States of America has drastically changed since the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001. Districts, schools, teachers, and principals were held accountable for student performance on standardized tests in ways they had never been before (Miller et al., 2007). Much of the researchers' criticism for such failing schools has been attributed to the quality of principals. Specifically, an attack was launched

against university-based principal preparation programs, whose critics contend, were ineffective and inappropriate. It was noted that these programs were overly theoretical, with very little practical applications. Studies conducted to uncover the perceptions of program participants yield supported evidence such as “I don’t think that universities ever prepared me” (Ivory & Acker-Hocevar, 2005, p. 5). Moreover, in 2005, “a long-term comprehensive study of administrator preparation programs” was conducted by Arthur Levine of Columbia University. Levine (2005) found the majority of leadership preparation programs failed to adequately prepare school leaders. He states, “...the overall quality of educational leadership programs in the United States to be poor. The majority of programs range from inadequate to appalling, even at some of the country's leading universities” (Levine, 2005, p. 23). In response to these and similar criticisms, members of the professoriate, and state representatives called for a university-district partnership.

As an international scholar, situated in a context where education is centralized, the university-ministry of education partnership is a unique partnership that needed to be studied. Additionally, this study can benefit countries whose educational system is structured similarly.

### **The Principalship and Preparation in Selected Countries**

In 2000, Malone and Caddell stated that the principalship has gone through five evolutionary stages, (a) one teacher schoolhouse, (b) lead teacher, (c) teaching principal, (d) school principal, and (e) supervising principal. The principalship is currently in its sixth stage, “change agent” (p. 63). As such principal preparation programs and professional development activities must evolve with the times to meet the needs of principals, and the schools they lead. From a global perspective, this holds; however, there are some distinct characteristics for ascension to the principalship, and principal preparation varies around the world. Some systems

are somewhat formalized, requiring advanced degrees in educational leadership or educational administration. In contrast, others require a prescribed number of years of successful classroom teaching, and leadership experience in the school system. In this section, I provide a brief overview of the qualifications and the requirements for the public school principalship in the United States of America and the Bahamas, my country of origin. Each section will begin with a brief overview of the country's location and educational system. The United States of America was selected due to its proximity to the Bahamas, many educators and school administrators in the Bahamas have completed degrees at American institutions, and mainly because the literature on university-district partnerships and principal preparation is most dominant in this context. In addition, the information presented for the Bahamas will also serve as the country and educational context for the study.

### ***The United States of America***

Located in the continent of North America, the United States of America (USA) is the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest nation in the world. It consists of 50 states and five major territories including American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2018). As such, it has one of the largest kindergartens through grade 12 (k-12) educational systems in the world, serving approximately 58.6 million school students, 53.1 of which are in the public school system (Bredeson, 2016). Children typically begin kindergarten at age 4, transition to elementary school, grades 1 through 5 at age 6. After which, they progress to grades 6 through 8 (middle school), and grades 9 through 12 (high school) (Bredeson, 2016; Khan, et al., 2015). The U.S. Department of Education, is the federal body charged with the oversight of education in the United States. Its mission "is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering



educational excellence and ensuring equal access” (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

Despite this central authority, education in the USA is decentralized, with each of the 50 states having its department of education, for example, Florida Department of Education (FLDOE), California Department of Education, Texas Education Agency (TEA), The State of Nevada Department of Education, Maine Department of Education, and Arkansas Department of Education.

The journey to the public school principalship in the USA is a formalized process. Typically, in each state, the aspiring principals are required to possess a teaching degree and certification, with at least three years of teaching experience, a Master’s degree in educational leadership, internships, a leadership examination, and certification from a district aspiring principal preparation program (inclusive of Level I and Level II training in some states, including Florida) (Black et al., 2017; Mendels, 2016; Young & Grogan, 2008). Principals are typically interviewed and selected at the district level. Furthermore, content and standards for the Master’s degree in educational leadership programs in the USA are linked to the Standards for School Leaders, which was developed by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) (Bush, 2009; McCarthy, 2015). The ISLLC was founded in the mid-1990s, and the first set of standards was developed in 1996, and updated in 2008 (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; McCarthy, 2015).

The United States has had a history of formal administrator preparation for more than 60 years (Hallinger & Lu, 2013 as cited in Brown, 2017). In 1924, one in five principals in the USA had a degree, and one in a hundred, a doctorate (Eikenberry, 1925 as cited by McCarthy, 2015). Although university-based preparation programs no longer hold the monopoly on principal preparation programs in every state, as alternative providers have emerged (McCarthy, 2015),

the call for university-district partnerships in most states is still evident as numerous states have mandated school leadership program redesign at the university level, which often required university-district partnerships in the redesign, and implementation process (Acker-Hocevar, 2013; Hunt, 2010; Phillips, 2013; Reames, 2010).

### ***The Commonwealth of The Bahamas***

“Scattered like precious jewels over 1,500 square miles of clear tropical sea at the top of the Caribbean, the chain of 700 islands, uninhabited cays and large rocks that make up The Bahamas covers just 5,382 square miles of land” (The Bahamas Tourist Office UK, n.d.). The 19 principal islands include Abaco, Acklins, Andros, Berry Islands, Bimini, Cat Island, Crooked Island, Eleuthera, Exuma, Grand Bahama, Harbour Island, Inagua, Long Island, Mayaguana, New Providence (where the nation’s capital Nassau is located), Ragged Island, Rum Cay, San Salvador, and Spanish Wells. Approximately, 90 percent of the population resides on the islands of New Providence, Grand Bahama, and Abaco; with 69.9 percent in New Providence, 15.5 percent in Grand Bahama, and 10.3 percentage “scattered on the remaining islands and cays” (The Government of The Bahamas, 2011). Unlike the USA, education in the Bahamas is centralized, with The Ministry of Education (MOE) (established 1964) as the governing authority for all public education matters (Tooms, 2007).

According to Hunter-Johnson et al. (2014), there are an estimated 206 schools in the Bahamas, 161 of which are publicly owned and operated by MOE and its Department of Education (DOE). Fifty schools are located on the nation’s capital, New Providence, and the additional schools are located throughout the remaining inhabited islands and cays (Hunter-Johnson et al., 2014). In addition, the compulsory age for schooling is 5 to 16, with mandatory school attendance beginning in primary school at grade one. The primary school in The Bahamas

is inclusive of grades one through six, junior high, grades seven through nine, and senior high, grades ten through twelve. However, All-Age Schools (ages 5-17), still exist on some of the family islands, and some secondary schools (grades 7-12).

Unlike the USA, the principalship in the Bahamas does not require a degree or licensure (Tooms, 2007). According to one of the participants in Tooms (2007) study,

All you need is your bachelor's degree and your 10 years experience and you're eligible for the interview. Now that does not mean you will pass the interview and get the job . . . But you are eligible. The Ministry of Education does not do the hiring. We have another ministry that is responsible for hiring and training all civil servants. So the team of people doing the interview may not all be educators. But the Ministry of Education has a representative at the interview. (p. 21)

### **Statement of the Problem and Purpose of the Research**

Quality education is a local and international concern. However, principal preparation in numerous jurisdictions, like The Bahamas has not received the attention that it deserves. "The fact is, principals have traditionally been thrown into their jobs without a life jacket, and they are expected to sink or swim" (The National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2003, p.1). Although poorly documented, some principals and school administrators in The Bahamas have received formal training through the Ministry of Education (MOE) and university-MOE partnership preparation programs, but others have not. For example, some school administrators in The Bahamas have participated in a university-based preparation program at The College of The Bahamas (COB), now University of The Bahamas (UB), in conjunction with Kent State University (Tooms, 2007). This partnership was the first time that a cohort of aspiring leaders in the Bahamas, completed a Master's degree in Educational Administration on Bahamian soil,

which was a one-time effort. Moreover, many other school leaders have completed a Diploma in Leadership at the Institute for Education Leadership (IEL), which was housed at The College of The Bahamas. The program (Diploma in Leadership) commenced in 2007, and was a partnership effort between COB and MOE. Additionally, principals have engaged in experiential learning as a part of their preparation, and other professional development opportunities such as the McREL Balanced Leadership Training. The latter of these preparation activities were not done in partnership with the University, but based on the literature, a partnership approach in this regard might improve the quality of principal preparation in the Bahamas. Further, with recurring discussions to revamp and reestablish the Diploma in Leadership program at UB, this study is timely and essential to the preparation of school leaders in The Bahamas. Moreover, some education faculty members, and senior members at UB have discussed in separate formal and informal meetings and or conversations, the need to reestablish the diploma program. Additionally, in 2016, a committee was formed at MOE, to develop a proposal for a comprehensive management system for school administrators in the Bahamas. Under the theme, “Developing Effective School Administrators”, the committee, referenced in its 2016 draft proposal the need for a modified Diploma in Leadership program (referred to in the document as the IEL program). Moreover, like teachers, doctors, lawyers or any other professional, administrator preparation in and for the Bahamas is crucial. It should no longer be left to on the job training or professional development after the appointment. To this end, it is believed that UB and MOE can partner in the preparation of school administrators.

The literature has investigated partnerships in numerous ways; however, based on a review of the literature, no study has sought the insights of potential stakeholders about the partnership. This study adds to the literature as it uncovered the perspectives of partners prior to

entering the partnership. These perspectives can be used in the creation and implementation of the partnership to produce a stronger partnership, by counteracting the challenges outlined in the literature.

### **Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was to explore how practitioners/stakeholders understand the role of partnerships in the development of principal preparation programs. This inquiry was guided by the following research questions: (a) How do educational stakeholders perceive the ideal partnership arrangement for the preparation of principals in The Bahamas? (b) In what ways do the perspectives of stakeholders reflect broader discourse about the quality of educational leadership preparation?

### **Rationale of the Study**

Principal preparation is essential for all principals. Scholars have argued that one way to improve the educational system is to improve the quality of educational leadership (Clarke et al., 2007; Crawford & Cowie, 2012; Leithwood & Levi, 2004). “Believed to be the key to principal effectiveness in the leadership position, leader preparation has been thoroughly examined by researchers and policy-makers over the last two decades” (Parylo, 2013, p. 178). Certainly, this is the case in some jurisdictions; however, school leader preparation in and for The Bahamas has been understudied. In addition, discussions to restructure and re-establish the university-based preparation program (Diploma in Leadership) at UB have re-occurred several times over the past four years. To this end, a study that was designed to uncover the ideal partnership arrangement from the perspectives of multiple stakeholders from UB and MOE is essential to the advancement of principal preparation in the Bahamas. Further, these insights might persuade other scholars, educational leaders, and government officials of the importance of considering

the perspectives and expectations of stakeholders prior to the start of a voluntary or mandated partnership agreement.

### **Background of the Study**

Currently, there are no university-MOE partnership school leadership preparation programs in The Bahamas. Public school administrators in The Bahamas are not required to possess any formal training before becoming a school administrator. Aspiring leaders can apply to the Public Service Commission (PSC), and if they meet the prescribed criteria, and are successful on the interview, they are appointed to the position, where they serve in an acting capacity for one year, and become permanent upon successful review of their performance during the first year. All aspiring leaders enter the school administration hierarchy as a senior master (male) or a senior mistress (female). In order to interview for the position, aspiring Senior Masters/ Mistresses must possess, at minimum, a Bachelor's degree in education, or a Bachelor of Arts or Science degree with a teaching certificate, at least ten years of teaching experience, including three years as a Team Leader or Head of Department, and above-average ratings on their Performance Appraisal Form (PAF) (Career Path Policy, 1997). After serving as a Senior Master/Mistress for a minimum of three years, and receiving above-average ratings for three consecutive years, the Senior Master/Mistress can then apply and be interviewed by the PSC for the position of Vice-Principal. If successful, they are also appointed in an acting capacity, and given permanent status in the same manner as described above for the Senior Master/Mistress. After serving three years, with an above-average rating on the PAF, Vice-Principals can then apply for the position of principal. Upon successfully interviewing with the PSC, they are appointed and confirmed in their position as done in the first two levels of administration.

Therefore, ascension to the principalship in The Bahamas can be described as a process based on quality teaching, leadership experience, and transition through the administrative ranks. The ascension is based primarily upon on-the-job experience, and less on formal training or completion of a Masters' degree in Educational Leadership/Administration or a related field, which is the case in countries such as the United States. As stated previously, some school administrators in The Bahamas have completed the Diploma in Leadership program; however, this was not done prior to becoming an administrator. Additionally, according to the MOE Draft Document (2016) entitled "Developing Effective School Administrators: Draft Proposal for a Comprehensive Management System for School Administrators" (DESA: DPFACMSFSA), more recently, some administrators have completed the McREL Balanced Leadership Training for school leaders (MOE Draft Document, 2016). Further, school administrators also engage in other professional development activities yearly.

According to the DESA: DPFACMSFSA (2016) the committee has recommended an aspiring administrator program for teachers who desire to transition into administration. Once they become a senior master/mistress, the committee recommends among other professional development activities, they would be required to complete a revised version of the IEL program. Further, the draft document stated this program (IEL) will be managed by COB (now UB), and housed at Mabel Walker Institute. Moreover, it mentioned other collaborative activities that would be done with COB/UB. It is evident that the committee sees the value of partnering with UB in the training of school administrators. However, the channels of communication are lacking, or not clearly reestablished at that time.

Meanwhile, at UB, senior members in the School of Education and senior UB officials, have had informal conversations to reestablish the Diploma in Educational Leadership program

(IEL Program). Additionally, in early 2017, when I sought approval for paid study leave from UB to pursue the PhD, I was given two possible program of study options, which according to one senior UB official were needed areas that would benefit the School, UB and the country. One of these areas was Educational Administration. I was advised to consider pursuing a PhD in Educational Administration so that I can assist with the work to reestablish the Diploma in Leadership program at UB. Based on my research on principal preparation globally, and university-district partnerships to prepare effective school leaders, it is clear to me that upon completion of my PhD, any efforts to re-establish the Diploma in Educational Leadership or an appropriate leadership training program for school leaders in The Bahamas, must be done in partnership with the Ministry of Education. Hence this research is critical as it lays the foundation for the work to be done.

### **Positionality and Background of the Researcher**

I am a Bahamian of African and European descent. Born and raised in New Providence Bahamas (Nassau is located on New Providence), I am fully committed to the advancement of my people and country. I am a product of teen pregnancy. Being my mother's second child at the age of 17, the importance of graduating high school, and "getting a good education" was always stressed to me. I grew up in a Christian home, and was baptized at the age of 10. Additionally, I am a product of the government school system. Attending school in New Providence, Bahamas, I was privileged to have some great teachers, some good teachers, and some not so good teachers. However, I decided at an early age that I wanted to be a teacher, because I wanted to help others, and I believed I could make a difference in the lives of others. Honestly, it felt like a calling, and 18 years in the profession, the calling is stronger now, than ever. My call to teach lead me to apply to COB, to pursue a degree in Home Economics Education. However, after being accepted



and admitted to COB, I learned that the Home Economics program was discontinued. I was told to major in Primary Education, and I could change my major to Home Economics, when the program began the following year. I did as I was advised, but after the first semester in Primary Education, I had this inclination that the Home Economics program would not be offered any time soon, so I decided to change my major to Business Economics, with the intention of becoming a Business Economics teacher. At this time at COB, preservice secondary teachers were required to obtain their Associate degree in the content area, and upon completion, acquire their teaching certificate from the School of Education. I made the decision to change my major, because I seriously doubted the Home Economics program would be offered soon, and I could not imagine teaching at the primary school level. Further, I am a first-generation college student, so withdrawing was not an option for me, I was determined to graduate from COB. After my first semester in the new major (Business Economics), I really could not see myself teaching Economics; however, I completed the program, and graduated a year and a half later. By my second year at COB, at the age of 18, I purposed in my heart that I would go abroad to school, obtain a Master's degree in Home Economics Education, and re-establish the Home Economics Education program at COB.

After completing my Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Home Economics Education at Florida International University, I returned home with hopes of starting the program at COB. However, six years later, after I started COB, the program was still discontinued. Therefore, I worked for three years at a private school, and one year at a public school. In 2007, I began teaching at COB, where I served as program coordinator, faculty advisor, and lead lecturer in the Family and Consumer Sciences Education (FCSE) program (formerly called Home Economics). Over the next ten years, I worked with other COB faculty, MOE officials, and current FCSE

educators to build, redesign, and sustain the program. As a teacher educator in the Bahamas, I spent countless hours in the secondary school system coaching, mentoring, and supervising FCSE preservice teachers. In 2015, I began contemplating going back to school to obtain my PhD. At first, I had planned to pursue the PhD in Curriculum and Instruction with a concentration in Higher Education Administration, with the hopes of someday becoming the President of UB. However, upon advice, and personal reflection, I decided to pursue the degree in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, and obtain a graduate certificate in Higher Education Administration. As previously explained, I was asked to consider majoring in Educational Administration, so that I could assist with re-establishing the Diploma in Leadership program that was previously offered at COB. Honestly, this feels like déjà vu!

I began my studies at the University of South Florida in January, 2017, and nearly five years later, I have completed my dissertation on principal preparation for The Bahamas. I must admit that when I was first advised to pursue this degree, I saw the need for it, but I could not understand how I was the best or most qualified person to take on the task, when I was never a school administrator. I thought to myself: “These people ga say... Who dis lil gal think she is ‘bout she training me to be a school administrator?” Translation: What qualifies her to train me? As a result of my course work in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, my experience as a graduate assistant, aiding in the teaching of Educational Leadership classes and Level II principal preparation training of future school leaders, coupled with my research and attendance at conferences in the field, I am better prepared for the challenge that awaits me. Further, as I reflect on my role as a high school teacher, being a subject coordinator for three of my four years as a school teacher, I have engaged in similar duties and responsibilities as an administrator, such as coaching, and supervising teachers. Further, for more than 10 years at COB/UB, I served as an

instructional leader and coach, as I assisted directly or indirectly in the preparation of over 100 preservice teachers, and I supervised over 30 FCSE pre-service teachers on their final teaching practicum. Moreover, my exposure to the school leadership preparation literature, has convinced me that I have functioned in and displayed two vital roles of school leaders, that of instructional leader, and relational leader. Currently, I am an Associate Professor and Chair of the School of Education at UB.

### **Assumptions of the Researcher**

Like any respected professional, I strongly believe, school leaders should be trained in theory and practice before becoming a school administrator. It is not enough to depend on their experience as a classroom teacher and service in a leadership capacity. While these qualities are important, and should be used in the selection criteria for candidate selection into these programs, formal training and preparation is essential and must be a prerequisite for the leadership role. Further, relevant and effective professional development throughout the leadership role is essential. Education has evolved over the years, and teachers in the Bahamas, similar to many other countries are required to have a bachelor's degree with teaching certification. Moreover, an increasing number of teachers in the Bahamas are obtaining masters degrees. Similarly, school administrators who are responsible for coaching and supervising teachers should not be at the same academic level as those who they train, and lead. To this end, I believe that school leaders at the senior master/mistress level, should possession at minimum, a certificate in Educational Leadership, Vice-Principals, should possess an advanced certificate in Educational Leadership, and Principals should possess a Master's degree in Educational Leadership. Moreover, these programs should be developed and designed in a partnership

arrangement between UB and MOE. If the University designs these programs in isolation, it might design programs that do not meet the needs of principals.

### **Conceptual Framework**

A typology of partnerships for promoting innovation was employed as the conceptual framework for this study. Developed by Barnett et al. (2010), this framework outlines the types of partnerships that can be development between a school, and its partners. These partnerships include: (a) independent agencies, (b) vendor model, (c) collaborative model, (d) symbiotic partnership model, (e) spin-off model, and 6) new organization. According to Barnett et al. (2010)

The types of partnerships outlined in this framework range from the simple to the complex. They also range from the less intensive and more clear cut to the complex and multifaceted. Interestingly, at one end of the continuum, the framework displays two independent organizations functioning separately (Independent Agencies), while at the opposite end a new quasi-independent organization is created out of an existing partnership (Spin-off Model). (p. 22)

A depiction of the types of partnerships is displayed in figure 1. Further, a description of each type of partnership in this conceptual framework is provided below:

Independent agencies are those that work individually to accomplish their goals and mission. They do not see a need or benefit in partnering; therefore, they do not form a partnership, but rather, as the name suggest, remain as independent agencies.

The vendor model is a transactional relationship, where partners interact to facilitate the transfer of a good or service. Once the good or service is provided, and paid for, usually in the

form of money, the relationship is ended, or if the experience was rewarding, the relationship can develop into the Collaborative Model, which is the next level or type of partnership.

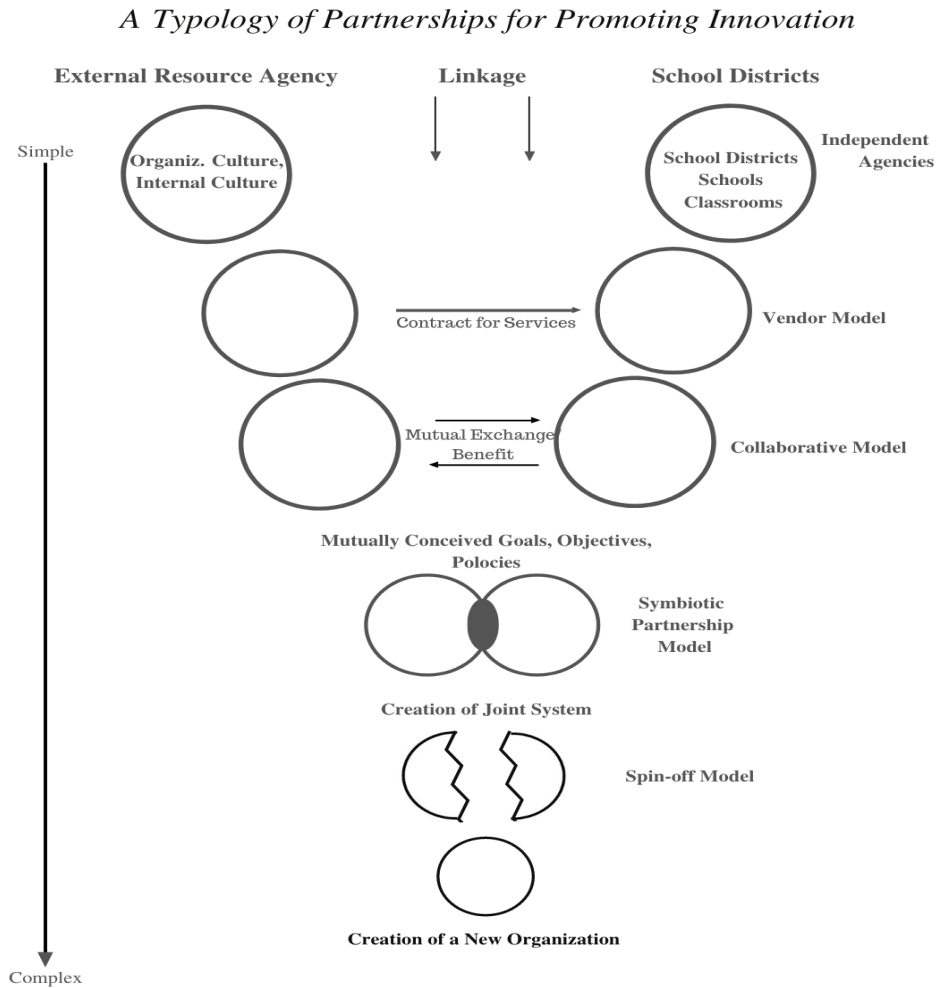
The collaborative model is characterized by “intensive and sustained mutual exchange and benefits (Barnett et al., 2010, p. 25). In comparison to the first two types of partnerships, this type requires a greater investment of time, trust-building, patience, mutual understanding, and a shared viewpoint. This collaborative partnership is developed over time, and can take a longer time to develop if the partners had not developed trust in their past relationships or interactions. Further, once developed, sustaining this level of partnership requires mutual exchange and benefits, and both parties must invest in the partnership over time.

Symbiotic partnership model typically develops from a collaborative partnership; however, there are mutual goals, objectives and policies which are developed together, and can only be accomplished through the joint efforts of the partners. Unique to this partnership are staff who may be on loan or newly hired to facilitate the work of the partnership. Further, this partnership is dependent on the people involved and their relationships with each other.

A spin-off model occurs when the work of the existing partners become so viable and perhaps profitable that it separates from its partner organizations and become a new independent organization. This separation may result from a newly found purpose or for political reasons. According to Barnett et al. (2010) several questions related to the founding partners should be addressed: “Are there still good reasons to continue the current partnership? Will the new spin-off organization replace the existing partnership? What is the risk that the new organization will become a competitor with one or both of the founding partners?” (p. 27).

**Figure 1**

*A Typology of Partnerships for Promoting Innovations*



Note. This framework outlines the types of partnerships that can be development between a school, and its partners.

From “A typology of partnerships for promoting innovation”, by B. G. Barnett, G. E. Hall, J. H. Berg, and M. M. Camarena, 2010. *Journal of School Leadership*, 20, p. 23. Copyright 2010 by Sage Publishing. Reprinted with permission.

## **Anticipated Outcomes of the Study**

This study aims to provide valuable insights on school leadership preparation and university partnerships globally. It garnered perspectives from relevant stakeholders about the partnership arrangement. Moreover, this study adds to the gap in the research on university-MOE partnerships outside of the USA. There was a need for a study in the Bahamian context that addresses the university-MOE partnership experience and principal preparation in general. This study has filled this gap, and the results of the study might improve the partnership experience, and quality of preparation programs, thus preparing more effective school leaders for The Bahamas, and indeed the world.

## **Definitions of Key Terms**

This section will define terms and list common abbreviations specific to this study.

*Aspiring principals* are teachers who desire to become school leaders, and eventually a principal.

Diploma in Educational Leadership is a program that was offered in the Bahamas at The College of The Bahamas to school administrators.

*Educational leadership or Educational Administration programs* are masters-level degree programs that are typically offered by universities to aspiring principals.

*Ministry of Education* is the central authority on all public education matters in The Bahamas. The Department of Education is housed within the ministry.

*Professional Development* as defined by Guskey (2000) include, "...those processes and activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of educators so

that they might, in turn, improve the learning of students” (p. 16). Additionally, professional development should be intentional, ongoing, and systemic.

*University-district partnership* describes the collaboration between universities and local district/s, to prepare aspiring leaders in ways to meet the needs of the district.

COB, abbreviation- The College of The Bahamas

IEL, abbreviation- Institute for Educational Leadership

MOE, abbreviation- Ministry of Education

PDAs, abbreviation- Professional development activities

PPs, abbreviation- Preparation programs

UB, abbreviation- The University of The Bahamas.

### **Overview**

In this chapter I discussed the importance of principal preparation and the benefits of preparing principals via the vehicle of university-district partnerships. I provided a thorough description of the principalship and principal preparation in the USA and The Bahamas. Additionally, I detailed the statement of the problem, the purpose of the research, the research questions, rationale of the study, background of the study, and my positionality and background as the researcher. Moreover, I discussed the conceptual framework used to guide this study, provided an overview of the study and its anticipated outcomes, as well as listed the important terminologies which will be used in this study. Chapter two includes a review of the literature on



university-district partnerships and principals' perspectives on their preparation and professional development activities.

## **CHAPTER TWO:**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

This chapter provides a review of the literature on university-district partnerships and principals' perspectives on their preparation and professional development activities. Firstly, I will discuss the descriptive literature on university-district partnerships with a focus on forming committees and working groups, co-constructing of curriculum courses, participant recruitment, and internship placement. Secondly, I will examine the more common structures of university-district partnership programs according to the literature. Moreover, the second part of this review addresses the emergent themes on university-district partnerships. These include successes and challenges of the partnership, university-urban district partnerships, and program evaluation or perspectives from program participants.

The purpose of this study is to explore how practitioners/stakeholders understand the role of partnerships in the development of principal preparation programs. The literature has investigated partnerships in numerous ways; however, based on a review of the literature, no study has sought the insights of potential stakeholders about the ideal partnership. To this end, this chapter will provide a review of the literature on university-district partnerships and principals' perspectives on their preparation and professional development activities.

To conduct this review of the literature, I utilized the University of South Florida Library online system. To this end I searched journals, book chapters and dissertations to search for scholarship in the field. I utilized the following databases to conduct the search: Google Scholar, ERIC, EBSCO, JSTOR, and ProQuest. The descriptor words used included: "University-district

partnership”, “university-district partnership AND principal preparation programs”, university-district partnership in Canada”, “university-district partnerships AND principal preparation AND United Kingdom or UK or England or Britain”, “Partnerships in Education AND principal preparation AND Bahamas”, “Professional Development and Principals”, and “Preparation programs”. The results of these searches revealed a vast amount of sources. To further focus the search, the researcher read abstracts and introductions, and scanned through each piece, selecting those entries that addressed the research questions. In addition, the search criteria was set to studies conducted in the past ten years, and were peer-reviewed.

### **University-District Partnerships**

In the United States of America, university-district partnerships have gained increased attention over the past three decades. To this end, as previously discussed, there has been an ongoing call for university-district partnerships in the preparation of principals. Osguthorpe et al. (1995) explain that a university-district partnership is created when a university and district partner forms a tightly structured relationship. They posit, partnerships are an active collaboration, which only develops after individuals connect and nurture relationships founded upon equity, trust, and a commitment to achieve shared goals. To this end, some scholars in the field and education stakeholders, namely government officials have agreed that university-district partnerships are essential in the preparation of school leaders. Borden et al. (2012) called for “an educational structure that fosters significant partnerships between schools, communities, and the university” (p. 126). Davis et al. (2005) listed university-district partnerships as one of the seven key characteristics of effective leadership programs in general. At a micro-level, Grogan et al. (2009), concur that the effectiveness of university preparation programs is dependent upon university-school partnerships.

A large majority of the literature on university-district partnerships is descriptive, with authors describing the nature of the partnership, the structure of the program, and their overall experience with the program redesign or implementation process (Black et al., 2017; Brooks, Harvard, Tatum, & Patrick, 2010; Hunt, 2010; Kelemen & Fenton, 2016; Martin & Clark, 2017; Reed & Llanes, 2010; Young & Grogan, 2008). This information might be relevant to those institutions and districts, or Ministries of Education, who would like to form partnerships, with a focus on preparing school leaders. Therefore, in this section of the review of the literature, a brief overview of the nature of the partnership and the program structure will be discussed. A critique of the literature will also be provided, as well as gaps to be filled by future research.

### **Nature of the Partnership**

University-district partnerships have evolved over the last 30 years when district leaders served on advisory boards. Today, these partnerships are more collaborative, with district partners participating in program design, curriculum review, recruitment, mentorship, and teaching of courses (Black et al., 2017; Kelemen & Fenton, 2016; Martin & Clark, 2017; Reed & Llanes, 2010; Young & Grogan, 2008). Moreover, some university-district partnership programs are housed within the district, at individual schools, utilizing a cohort model, using the school and district challenges and data sources in the learning experience (Young & Grogan, 2008). Based on this review of the literature, the nature of university-district partnerships is evident in the formation of committees, working groups, advisory boards or teams, constructing of curriculum courses, participant recruitment, and internship placement (Borden et al., 2012; Brooks et al., 2010; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Gooden, Bell, Gonzales, & Lippa, 2011; Grogan et al., 2009; Kaimal, et al., 2012; Korach, 2011; Martin & Clarke, 2017; Reed & Llanes, 2010; Walker, 2015; Tooms, 2007).

### ***Formation of Committees, Working Groups, Advisory Boards or Teams***

There is much evidence in the existing literature that support the notion that the nature of university-district partnerships involves the formation of committees, working groups, advisor boards or teams with numerous members from the university and district/MOE (Brooks et al., 2010; Korach, 2011; Reed & Llanes, 2010; Tooms, 2007). Brooks et al. (2010) explains that an advisory council was formed consisting of key stakeholders, including district representatives, faculty members, and students. Curriculum, partnership, admission, and assessment sub-committees were also formed. Korach (2011) explained how district leaders, College of Education faculty members, and a local foundation formed the program design team. In a multi-level university-district partnership approach, Reed and Llanes (2010) reports that the team included educational leadership faculty, the faculty head, dean, and superintendents from the seven partner districts. In addition, Tooms (2007) in her study that reports the first ever educational administration program to be offered in The Bahamas, reports that meetings were held with various school administrators and Ministry of Education officials to discuss student recruitment initiatives, and program structure.

### ***Co-Constructing of Curriculum Courses***

According to the literature, another tenet of university-district partnerships is co-constructing the curriculum (Black et al., 2017; Borden et al., 2012; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Gooden et al., 2011). Borden et al. (2012) in describing the redesign process of one university-district partnership, explained that they were committed to working as partners throughout the redesign process. Black et al. (2017) in documenting the University of South Florida's partnership with local districts, explained that upon the directors, and mentor principals request, changes were made to the master's degree curriculum to "support local school practices

and needs” (p. 203). They reported that faculty were open to change, as long as they maintained the critical elements of the Educational Leadership program which included an emphasis on social justice, engagement with theory, and research-informed frameworks for practice.

Similarly, Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) report that the faculty at San Diego University worked collaboratively with the San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD) to develop curriculum and plan instruction. Gooden et al. (2011) in sharing the University of Texas partnership posits:

One shared understanding reflected in the MOU [Memorandum of Understanding] was that the curriculum would be collaboratively developed, mapped, and monitored, and that candidate screening and assessment would be a joint process between the district and the university leaders. (p. 4)

### ***Participant Recruitment***

Another common practice in the nature of university-district partnership programs includes the process of collaboratively selecting program participants (Gooden et al., 2011; Kaimal et al., 2012; Korach, 2011; Martin & Clark, 2017). This proved to be the most cited tenet of the partnership for this review. As seen above in the Gooden et al. (2011) account, Korach (2011) also explained how the university and district collaboratively recruited and selected the cohort members. Kaimal et al. (2012) contends:

The partners have also continued to clarify and define the partnership through shared responsibilities. For example, recruitment and selection processes were a joint effort of Lehigh and the school districts, including hosting recruitment events, interview and selection criteria, and identification of faculty. (p. 911)

In addition, Martin and Clark (2017) provides a detailed account of the participant selection process between the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and the Educational Leadership Program at

Winthrop University. They explained a multi-stage process which included an established timeline and recruitment strategy prepared by the university faculty and deputy superintendent, initial identification of candidates by district principals and leaders, using set criteria, followed by nomination, attendance at an open house event, application and acceptance into the program, if successful.

### ***Internship Placement***

Although vital in the bridging of theory to practice in the Educational Leadership program, the literature says very little about internship placement or selecting of field-based coaches. One of the few examples is Brooks et al. (2010) who reported that the superintendent and Educational Leadership faculty decided the Field-based Coaches (FBCs) collectively. Further, in support of internship placement as a key component in university-district partnerships, some scholars in the field such as Walker (2015) and Grogan et al. (2009), contend that partnerships are essential in developing leaders, and school-based leadership program is more effective than those strictly confined to the university setting.

The scholarship on the nature of university-district partnerships provides valuable insights for those who wish to enter into such arrangements to improve their principal preparation program. However, these insights are limited to a description of what took place from the perspectives of university partners. For the most part, the experience is painted as straight-forward and amicable. As will be discussed later in this chapter, some scholars did provide insights into the challenges and pitfalls to avoid when partnering, but these are limited. What is needed is a study that allows prospective partners to identify possible problems that might arise, and provide suggestions of how these challenges can be avoided or overcome. This study will accomplish this task.

## **Structure of the Programs**

The descriptive literature on university-district partnerships not only describes the nature of the partnership, but it also provides insights into the program structure of the university-district principal preparation programs (Black et al., 2017; Davis & Darling-Hammond, 2012; Luu, 2010; Mackinnon, et al., 2019; Walker, Bryant, & Lee, 2013; Yan & Ehrich, 2009). Admittedly, these structures are shared by many university-based principal preparation programs in general. Some of the program structures revealed in this review of the literature include two-year Master's degree programs such as those seen in The Bahamas, Canada, and the USA, Administrator/Leadership Certificates such as those offered in China, England, and in some US universities, and the Diploma in Instructional Leadership, offered in Canada. In addition, most of these programs are offered in a cohort design, and include an internship element or practicum experience at the end. What follows is a brief account of these offerings. Furthermore, a critique of this portion of the literature will be provided, followed by the gaps to be filled by future research.

### **Two-Year Degree Program**

The two-year Master's degree structure is a common structural model for Master's degrees offered in Canada, the Bahamas, and the USA. Typically, these programs begin in the Fall semester and end at the end of the Summer of the second year. Webber and Scott (2010) and Khan et al. (2015) reports that Master's degree programs in Canada consist of 12 courses, 36 hours. Similarly, Tooms (2007) noted that the Educational Administration program offered in the Bahamas consisted of 33 graduate credit hours (11 classes). The program began in Fall 2003 and ended in Summer 2005. Additionally, the University of Missouri St. Louis also offers a 36 credit hour program (See Appendix A), designed for completion in two years (Keleman & Fenton,



2016). These program structures are rather similar to the US program, as many US colleges offer principal preparation programs in Canada, and The Bahamas (Tooms, 2007).

### **Administrator/Leadership Certificate**

In addition to the Master's degree requirement in the USA, a Level II principal certification is also required in some states such as Florida (Black, et al., 2017), and the Ontario Principals' Qualification Program Level I (PQP 1) is required in Ontario Canada (Luu, 2010). In Canada, PQP 1 requires a minimum of 100 contact hours, and 25 hours for completion of coursework and practical hours (Ng & Szeto, 2016). From the American perspective, Black et al. (2017) describes a unique university-district partnership with school districts in Florida, to certify current assistant principals with the Level II certification requirement. This year-long program includes a minimum of 70 contact hours, and additional hours to conduct a yearlong appreciative project in the school setting. The GCP Level II program is unique in that it is the only Level II program in Florida that is offered at the university level.

### **Diploma in Instructional Leadership**

Unique to the Canadian context is the Diploma in Instructional Leadership which is offered by the Nova Scotia Instructional Leadership Academy (NSILA) in partnership with the Nova Scotia Educational Leadership Consortium (Mackinnon, et al., 2019). The consortium consists of six universities that are authorized to offer the program (G. Mackinnon, personal communication, February 5, 2019). The program consists of six courses, and a final culminating assessment, to be completed at the end of year three. This program is designed to be completed in three years (See Appendix B).

## **Cohort Model**

The importance of the cohort model in leadership preparation, especially for non-traditional students is repeatedly stated in the literature (See Barnett, 2004; Norris & Barnett, 1994). Educational leadership programs typically cater to working professionals (teachers) who typically cannot attend classes during the day. Therefore, most programs were offered part-time, with classes held on weekends, evenings, or during the summer vacation time. (Keleman & Fenton, 2016; Tooms, 2007; Yan & Ehrich, 2009). Examples of the cohort model was evident in the program offered in The Bahamas, where the cohort consisted of 18 members, 17 females, and 1 male (Tooms, 2007). Auburn University, located in Alabama, USA also selected a cohort model. They selected the cohort model as it would provide the participants with a peer support network, an opportunity to integrate the coursework and field experiences in a cohesive and organized manner, and it was the most efficient way to administer the program (Reed & Llanes, 2010).

This contribution to the literature is useful as it provides insights into the possibilities of program structures for university-district partnership programs, at different levels of preparation. Its insights are especially useful for those institutions such as the University of The Bahamas, who is in the initial phase of the redesign process. To this end, it provides examples of what structures have been utilized in other contexts, and might be adapted to and for the Bahamian setting. On the contrary, the literature does not address whether or not these program structures best meet the needs of program participants, in terms of their personal and professional commitments.

Further, in describing the program structure, most of the authors did not report whether the courses were offered face to face, online, blended, or a combination of these. Considering the

Bahamian context, and the geography of the island, with most islands being accessible only by boat or plane, this information is pertinent. Additionally, the authors did not explain how or why they selected the structures they did. This information would also be useful to program designers, and other partners in the field as they develop or revise their preparation programs. To this end, this study would address such concerns and ascertain from current principals and partners their perspectives and recommendations about and for the partnership arrangement and principal preparation in the Bahamian context.

### **Emergent Themes on University-District Partnerships**

In addition to the focus on the nature of the partnership, and program structure, the literature on university-district partnerships is inclusive of other aspects of university-district partnerships such as successes and challenges of the partnership, university-urban district partnerships, and program evaluation or perspectives from program participants. In the following sections, these themes will be addressed, followed by a critique of the literature, and the gaps in the literature to be addressed by future research.

### **Successes and Challenges of University-District Partnerships**

Scholars in the field have focused on the successes and challenges of university-district partnerships (Black et al., 2017; Brooks et al., 2010; Browne-Ferrigno & Sanzo, 2011; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Kaimal et al., 2012; Sanzo et al., 2011; Tooms, 2007). Tooms (2007) suggest that this partnership initiative provided an opportunity for the preparation of school leaders in The Bahamas that had never occurred before. Completion of the program was a success within itself, as the participants would not have had the opportunity to enroll and complete the program, had the partners not join forces. Further, Tooms (2007) conducted qualitative interviews and constant comparative methods to analyze the data to determine what

motivated participants to enroll in the program. Findings revealed the majority of the participants enrolled in the program with hopes of becoming an assistant principal, or principal.

Another vital contribution of university-district partnerships is the ability of these programs to connect theory and practice. Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) provides testimonial evidence from a program participant who commended her university partnership program for connecting theoretical knowledge to the practical aspects of school leadership. She submits,

I thought it was just brilliant to combine the theory and practice. I like that the program has been modeled around learning theory. I like the fact that our classes are germane to what is going on daily in our school it really helps to make the learning deeper and, obviously, more comprehensive-San Diego ELDA intern principal. (p.50)

Similarly, Sanzo et al. (2011) study of a university-school district leadership preparation program partnership found that program participants and district personnel were able to build stronger bridges between theory and practice as a consequence of using holistic approaches. Participants bridge the gap through developing meaningful relationships, and engaging in relevant professional development activities that were embedded throughout the coursework.

On the contrary, there are some challenges to university-district partnerships. Cost to the district and university might be a challenge when creating and implementing a district-university partnership. In a survey study of professors' perspectives about the new Kentucky policy which required a mandatory partnership between universities and districts to redesign their Educational Leadership program, several members of faculty expressed concern about the cost involved at the district and university level, and who would cover that cost. They were concerned the costs related to human resource capital and time would present a challenge for districts and universities who were currently faced with budget cuts and financial deficits (Browne-Ferrigno

& Sanzo, 2011). Similarly, Tooms (2007) also expressed concerns about the cost to participants, as the Ministry of Education was not subsidizing the program, and neither would the participants receive a salary increase after completing the program.

Another challenge to university-district partnership is the availability of qualified personnel to aid in facilitating the program. For example, Tooms (2007) stated that 8 of the 11 courses were taught by Kent State University faculty, as the College of The Bahamas did not have any faculty with terminal degrees in Educational Leadership. Providing further evidence of this challenge, Tooms (2007) also noted that the School Law course that is usually offered in the US context was not relevant to The Bahamas, and could not be revised or delivered in the Bahamian context as no member of COB faculty was qualified to teach the course. Moreover, withdrawal of members or entire districts was also presented as a challenge in the research presented by Kaimal et al. (2012) and Black et al. (2017), respectively.

### **Urban University-District Partnerships**

Another emerging theme in the field was a strong focus on university-district partnerships in urban districts (Black et al., 2017; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Gooden et al., 2011; Kaimal et al., 2012; Korach, 2011; Stevenson & Shetley, 2015). The literature is robust on the inequalities in the US educational system as it relates to urban schools, and the black and brown economically disadvantaged students who typically attend these schools. There have been endless critiques about numerous aspects of these schools, especially the quality of teachers and principals who are often underprepared for teaching and leading in these schools (Clemmitt, 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2009; Walther-Thomas, 2016). In response to this plight, Gooden et al. (2011) support other scholars in the field who acknowledge university-district partnerships as a part of the solution to improve the effectiveness of principal preparation programs, thus

increasing the pool of qualified leaders, better prepared to work in urban schools. The authors who focus on urban university-district partnerships included useful insights on various aspects of partnership such as partnership related challenges and strategies for overcoming them (Gooden et al., 2011; Kaimal et al., 2012).

Kaimal et al. (2012) qualitative study of stakeholders in a multi-organizational partnership in Philadelphia, analyzed their partnership development against a framework of dimensions of effective collaborations. Findings revealed that challenges in partnerships are inevitable, but can be overcome by improved communication, mutual respect, and shared commitment of goals and responsibilities, which are agreed upon by all parties, early on in the process. Similarly, Gooden et al. (2011) in their descriptive piece shared pitfalls to avoid and recommendations for those interested in engaging in university-urban district partnerships. They contend, it is important to have a bridge person from the district to work along with the university partners. They also recommend stakeholders plan for the partnership, and create a memorandum of understanding to guide the partnership arrangement. Partners should also agree upon ways to monitor and assess their progress.

With another focus on urban university-district partnerships, Stevenson and Shetley (2015) used document analysis to examine the partnership experiences of three university-district partnerships in urban communities. The researchers used the Whitaker et al. (2004) best practices for university-district partnerships to determine if the partnerships were in alignment with these best practices. Based on the analysis, it was discovered that the partners met three of the five best practices, with high-quality curriculum and instruction, and student support through advising being their greatest strengths.

In an attempt to assess the impact of an urban university- district partnership, Korach (2011) study focused on the assessment of second-order change in program participants after completing the program. In a mixed-methods research design, utilizing two multiyear intrinsic case studies, Korach (2011) used document analysis, surveys, and interviews with principals, district administrators, and teachers to determine the ability of program graduates to achieve second-order change in their schools. According to Korach (2011), second-order change occurs when a change causes the norms and values of an organization to be challenged and changed. Findings suggest program participants engaged in second-order change in some aspects of the job such as providing feedback to teachers about their instructional practices. However, all graduates reported having difficulty with effectively handling non-performing teachers.

Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) in their study of exemplary school leadership preparation programs, found that one of the main qualities of these programs is the existence of positive university-district partnerships. They explained that the distinguishing quality of the programs they studied was the willingness of the stakeholders to collaborate. This final point addresses the benefits of university-district/MOE partnerships. To this end, the proposed study will allow stakeholders to have an input on how this partnership should be structured and managed.

### **Program Evaluation or Perspectives of Program Participants**

Another theme that has been narrowly addressed in the literature is the evaluation of university-district partnership principal preparation programs by program participants. This review of the literature revealed four studies, two from Canada (Luu, 2010; Mackinnon et al., 2019), and two from the USA (Borden, et al., 2012; Mejia, Devin, & Calvert, 2016). Two of the studies utilized mixed methods (Borden, et al., 2012; Mackinnon et al., 2019), and the other two conducted a quantitative study (Luu, 2010; Mejia et al., 2016).

Borden et al. (2012) utilized a mixed-methods approach to study the effectiveness of field-based coursework to promote learning for leadership. They collected data from program participants at the end of class sessions, and via the end of class evaluations. The major finding of this study was the ability of the program to provide students with opportunities to connect theory with practice. This opportunity was gained through their engagement with their field-based inquiry project. Although the authors did not fully explain the nature of the field-based inquiry project, based on the literature in the field, these experiences for aspiring principals are vital and beneficial to their success on the job.

Mackinnon et al. (2019) used mixed methods to collect data from 90 former program participants. The researchers investigated how effective the program was in preparing them for their leadership roles. Results indicate that participants are better prepared or have grown in the areas of professional growth, instructional leadership, and overall administrative effectiveness. However, program improvements are needed in the areas of socioemotional and mental health, and community outreach.

Luu (2010) conducted an exploratory survey study with six of the former participants in the aspiring leaders' program in Ontario, Canada. He inquired as to how well the program prepared them for their current positions, and he sought to uncover their recommendations for program improvement. Overall, the participants felt the program prepared them well for managerial tasks such as time management and handling the budget. Related to program improvement, participants desired greater opportunities to learn and practice leadership skills, and they preferred courses offered in a cohort model. Again, field experience is indirectly suggested by these participants, and a delivery method for the program structure is presented.



Also utilizing a survey study of former participants, Mejia et al. (2016), collected data from 38 participants of four of the partner districts who completed the master's degree academy at Kansas State University. As a result of their participation in the academy, the participants reported increases in their leadership self-efficacy, increased ability to think at an organizational level, and they felt more prepared to take on other leadership responsibilities. Further, unique to the literature on university-district partnerships, the authors of this study were also graduates of the program. They concluded their study with reflections of their journeys in and upon completion of the program.

### **Trends and Gaps**

The literature in this section provide valuable insights into the successes and challenges of university-district partnerships, urban university-district partnerships, and although limited, perspectives of these programs from program participants. Successes and challenges are identified, but what evidence indicates that these partnerships result in upward mobility for the program participants, and increased student achievement as a result of their leadership? Further, in what ways are participants better prepared to handle the demands of their job upon completing the program? Additional studies are needed in this area. Moreover, some challenges are presented, but greater insights are needed into how these challenges can be overcome. Additionally, an investigation of less technical or program related challenges is needed. What about challenges faced by the participants who are enrolled in these programs? What are their stories, and how have they overcome? In addition, the findings on urban university-district partnerships are commendable, but research is needed in other locations like the Bahamas, that can also benefit and perhaps improve their principal preparation as a result of findings in similar research. Moreover, an in depth look at participant' perspectives of these programs are needed.

The literature from the US contexts, presents an account of 14 current participants in one study (Borden et al., 2012) and 38 former participants (Mejia et al., 2016) in another, while research from Canada shares an account of six (Luu, 2010), and 90 former program participants (Mackinnon et al., 2019). Indeed, participant perspectives in the delivery and redesign of university-district partnership programs, are essential; however, with limited input thus far, further studies are needed. Their voice is needed in the design of programs that will prepare aspiring leaders who will join them, or even replace them in the profession. Moreover, two of the studies were quantitative (Mejia et al., 2016, & Luu, 2010) and the other two utilized mixed methods (Borden et al., 2012, & Mackinnon et al., 2019). These approaches were appropriate for the intended study. However, a qualitative interview study would provide greater insights from current principals, and stakeholders about the ideal partnership arrangement, inclusive of program structure, field experience, and mentorship.

### **Principals' Perspectives on Professional Development and Programs**

As evident in the previous section, very few studies within the past ten years have sought the perspectives of program participants of university-district partnership programs (Borden, et al., 2012; Luu, 2010; Mackinnon et al., 2019; Mejia et al., 2016). Therefore, in an attempt to gain further insight into principals' perspectives about their preparation, this section of the review will investigate principals' perspectives about their preparation, inclusive of preparation programs (PPs) and professional development activities (PDAs) received throughout their tenure as principal. Moreover, this review of the literature was expanded to include those PPs and PDAs that did not specify that they were facilitated through a university-district partnership. Further, this review of the literature revealed no studies pertaining to principals' perspectives about their PPs or PDAs that were facilitated through a university-district partnership. Black, Mann, and

Haines (2017) provided the sole account of a university-district partnership that provided participants with preparation and professional development; however, it was a descriptive account of the partnership, and participants' perspectives were not sought. To this end, the studies presented address the perspectives of principals and others in some cases, but do not occur in a partnership agreement. These studies will be explored, and a critique of the methods and findings will be presented.

This review of the literature revealed eleven studies that explored principal perspectives about their PPs and or PDAs. The context of these studies is global, representing the perspectives of principals in the USA (Dodson, 2014; Johnson, 2016; Johnson & James, 2018; Styron & LeMire, 2009), Canada (Wright & de Costa, 2016), China (Xing & Dervin, 2014; Wilson & Xue, 2013), Pakistan (Nasreen & Odhiambo, 2018), Scotland (P. Woods, et al., 2009), South Africa (Mestry, 2017), and United Arab Emirates (Hourani & Stringer, 2015). I found no studies which sought the perspectives of Bahamian principals. Hence the need for the proposed study. Context matters, and as suggested by Xing and Dervin (2014) there is no one size fits all approach for principal preparation. Further, six of the studies focused on principals' perspectives about their PDAs (Hourani & Stringer, 2015; Nasreen & Odhiambo, 2018; P. Woods et al., 2009; Wilson & Xue, 2013; Wright & de Costa, 2016; Xing & Dervin, 2014), four about their PPs (Dodson, 2014; Johnson, 2016; Johnson & James, 2018; Styron & LeMire, 2009), and one addresses their perspectives about their PPs and PDAs (Mestry, 2017).

In addition, of the studies that sought perspectives about PDAs, four sought the perspectives of principals only (Hourani & Stringer, 2015; Nasreen & Odhiambo, 2018; Wright & de Costa, 2016; Xing & Dervin, 2014), and in addition to the principals' perspectives, one study sought the input of the continuing professional development coordinators (P. Woods et a.,

2009), and another of vice-principals (Wilson & Xue, 2013). Similarly, three of the four studies which sought principals' perspectives about their preparation program, also sought the input of others with perspectives shared by vice principals/assistant principals (Johnson, 2016; Styron & LeMire, 2009), and members of faculty (Johnson & James, 2018). When collaborating, if it is vital that the recommendations of all stakeholders are heard. Therefore, in addition to the perspectives of principals, this study will seek recommendations from University faculty and MOE officials to ensure that the voice of all stakeholders are heard, combining the feedback, in an attempt to create a preparation and in-service model that would be of benefit to all. Conversely, Dodson (2014) sought the perspectives of principals only, and so did Mestry (2017), but this study sought their input about their preparation program and professional development activities.

Several studies that sought the perspectives of principals about their PDAs were interested in their areas of need for PDAs (P. Woods et al., 2009) or if and how the PDAs are meeting their learning needs (Nasreen & Odhiambo, 2018; Wilson & Xue, 2013). P. Woods et al. (2009) mixed-methods study surveyed 315 primary and secondary head teachers with varied levels of experience in the position, and interviewed 36 headteachers, and 25 continuing professional development coordinators throughout Scotland. Findings suggest that PDAs are needed in the areas of dispersing leadership, management and support for underachieving staff, and strategies to improve teaching and learning (P. Woods et al., 2009). Similarly, Nasreen and Odhiambo (2018) also conducted a mixed methods study of 30 secondary principals in Pakistan. According to these principals, the current PDAs were not meeting their learning needs. Put differently, the principals were not satisfied with the current PDAs. They expressed a need for

PDA that would further assist them in developing their school's vision, and engage parents and community partners in their school.

In a phenomenographic enquiry conducted in Fuqing China, Wilson and Xue (2013) interviewed four principals and six deputy principals to uncover whether or not their PDAs met their learning needs. Further, the PDAs under review took place during their preservice and in-service training. Participants noted that the PDAs emphasized theory, and failed to meet their learning needs. One principal stated: "I discussed some training programmes with my classmates. Most of us think that the training is too theoretical, offering too little in terms of skills or knowledge related to our practice" (Wilson & Xue, 2013, p. 808). Moreover, the participants provided recommendations to improve this aspect of the training. These will be discussed in the following section.

Equally important, some scholars sought recommendations from participants for improvement of PDAs (Hourani & Stringer, 2015; Wilson & Xue, 2013). Wilson and Xue (2013) found that participants desired PDAs that would keep them well informed of the reform and policy changes, as well as incorporate meaningful site visits. Hourani and Stringer (2015) qualitative exploratory case study which conducted interviews with 16 principals found that principals suggested that improvements be made in the content areas of leading strategically, leading teaching and learning, leading the people, leading the organization, and leading the community. In addition to studies that sought the learning needs of principals, and recommendations for improvement in some instances, one study took an in-depth look at how one program, the Principal Reflections on Practice (PROP), met principals learning needs, and its impact on their understandings and leadership practice. Wright and de Costa (2016) conducted a collective case study with 17 elementary and secondary principals of an urban school district in

Alberta, Canada. Findings revealed principals' perspectives varied on the effectiveness of the program to support and address their needs. Some shared that the program was effective, while others contend that it was not. According to the authors, this finding supports the need for principals to be afforded the freedom to choose professional development activities that best meet their needs and interests (Wright and de Costa, 2016). Participants also provided conditions that they agree would support their professional learning. Some of these included: "2. involvement in professional development program design; [and] 3. ongoing and open communication between stakeholders" (Wright and de Costa, 2016, p. 41). Indeed, both conditions are necessary, and the proposed research will provide insights and or recommendations to support these conditions from the Bahamian perspective.

Some scholars such as P. Woods et al. (2009) and Nasreen and Odhiambo (2018) who sought participants areas of need for PDAs, also sought the barriers that hindered them from participating in PDAs. Similarly, both findings revealed that time and workload were barriers or constraints to principals' participation in PDAs. Acknowledging the barriers might or should encourage providers of PDAs to implement strategies that might assist participants in overcoming these barriers. Other scholars were interested in what PDAs were currently available to participants (principals/ vice-principals) (Nasreen & Odhiambo, 2018; Wilson & Xue, 2013). According to the six secondary principals in the Nasreen and Odhiambo (2018) study, PDAs available and undertaken were numerous in type; however, those that were most utilized by the group included single-day workshops/short courses, mentoring, collaborative work, and self-directed learning.

Xing and Dervin (2014) conducted a qualitative case study with Chinese principals who completed a Finnish training course for principals. This study was unique as it provides the

insights of six principals, who completed a training course in another country. The researchers investigated the program's usefulness and the factors that prevented the participants from applying what they learned to the Chinese context. A total of 21 principals participated in the course, but six participated in the study. Further, data was collected on three phases of the training: pre-training, training, and post-training. However, the article focused on the training phase. The participants expressed some satisfaction with the training program, but certain areas of improvement were also needed. Three of the six participants were dissatisfied with the format and content of the training, and complained that very little new insights were gained, and that the language barrier was also a challenge, as the content had to be translated from English to Chinese. Moreover, the researchers contend, as suggested by other scholars in the field, these findings support the stance that PDs that do not consider the needs of participants are ineffective (Xing & Dervin, 2014). Hence the proposed study is timely as indirectly, it would uncover the needs of principals, so as to improve their preparation and training through the UB-MOE partnership.

This section of the review will discuss those studies that sought the perspectives of participants about their principal preparation program (PPP). As noted earlier, based on this review of the literature, only four relevant studies emerged. These studies were conducted in the USA. Specifically, a private university in the southeastern USA (Johnson & James, 2018), four southeastern states in the USA (Styron & LeMire, 2009), Kentucky (Dodson, 2014), and Florida and Georgia (Johnson, 2016). While these studies are relevant for the intended context the scholarship lacks studies in other parts of the world that can result in improved principal preparation in those countries. This study seeks to understand the preparation of principals in the Bahamas through the mechanism of partnerships. Further, other Caribbean countries could also

benefit from the findings of this study as the principal preparation and ascension to the position of principal is similar in most cases.

Two of the studies are unique in their purpose, while the other two are closely related. Johnson and James (2018) investigated the perspectives of principals and faculty members about their preparation program at a specific university, so as to inform the redesign process. In this qualitative study, they interviewed four principals and four university faculty members. They found that faculty desired more opportunities for authentic learning, skills building, practical application courses, and partnership with school districts. In a similar vein, principals also wanted their learning to be meaningful. They expressed a lack of input from current principals about the curriculum content. Conversely, Dodson (2014) employed quantitative methods, where 263 principals completed a survey via survey monkey. There was a response rate of 30%. Dodson (2014) focused on the field experience aspect of principal preparation, how principals perceived these experiences, and how these experiences could be improved. Findings revealed that most participants completed field experience as part of their preparation program, and they found their experiences to be valuable. Specifically, they valued hands-on practical experiences verses merely observing a principal. They found observation of principals to be useless. In addition, the need for field experiences with a focus on budget and finance, and site-based decision making was also evident. Further, the few principals who did not complete a field experience expressed a desire to do so, as they believed this experience would better prepare them for their role as principal. Will similar recommendations be given in the Bahamian context? The proposed study seeks to address this question.

In another survey study of 33 principals and 31 assistant principals, Johnson (2016) asked closed and open-ended questions to ascertain the perceptions of principals and assistant



principals about the effectiveness of their university-based principal preparation program and professional learning. Specifically, the researcher was interested in the most and least valuable aspects of the programs. Participants agreed that the program prepared them for some aspects of the job, inclusive of school leadership and school law. However, the programs failed to prepare them in the areas of managing school budget, data analysis, and human resources. Rather than evaluate the effectiveness of preparation programs from the perspectives of principals and assistant principals, Styron and Lemire (2009) sought the level of satisfaction of these participants with their programs. Three hundred and seventy-four principals and assistant principals were surveyed using a questionnaire which focused on four areas: student achievement, school management, special populations, and communications. According to the findings, participants were content with all areas of preparation, except their preparation for addressing the needs of special populations. This finding is rather profound as few studies addressed the preparation of school leaders in meeting the needs of special populations. Further, this study was also one of the only ones that considered the participants years in the current position, and how it might influence their perspectives. This is a factor that will be considered in the proposed study.

Unlike the other studies in this section, Mestry (2017) is the sole study that sought the perspectives of principals about their preparation and professional development training in a single study. This qualitative study, of 15 South African principals explored how these principals perceived and experienced their professional development to improve their leadership at school. To this end, it was discovered that similar to the Bahamas, South Africa has not established any formal preparation programs for aspiring or practicing principals. Participants expressed a need for such programs that would be designed to meet their needs, as the current programs were not.

They explained that most PDs addressed policy issues rather than content which catered to their needs. In addition, they rated their training programs as far below par to mediocre. To this end, the researcher recommended that the entity in question should identify the needs of principals and teaching staff, recommend, and implement professional development activities that could meet their needs (Mestry, 2017).

### **Overview**

Principal preparation is an international concern. As revealed in this review of the literature, scholars have expressed interest in various aspects of principal preparation, inclusive of those preparation activities that were facilitated through a university-district partnership, as well as those that were not. Regardless of this arrangement, it is clear that the perspectives of educational leaders, namely principals have not been heard in certain jurisdictions like the Bahamas and other Caribbean islands. To this end, there is a need for a study that will contribute significantly to the advancement of principal preparation internationally. Unlike any other study, this single study has addressed stakeholder views about the proposed partnership arrangement, while giving current principals a platform to express their views about keys faucets of the partnership (ie. principal's preparation needs and program structure, inclusive of field experience and mentorship needs). Moreover, for far too long, principals and their perspectives have been silenced amongst the stakeholders who should deliberate during the partnership agreement. This study has merged the conversations, and allowed principals, and other valuable stakeholders, such as university faculty, district superintendents and other Ministry officials to share their perspectives, prior to the start of the partnership agreement. In chapter three I discuss the methodology of this study. Namely, I detail the purpose of the study, the research questions, research paradigm and design, methods and procedures and data generation methods. Before

concluding the chapter, I also discuss my role as the researcher, the data processing and analysis techniques, quality criteria, ethical consideration, and data management.

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

In this chapter, I outline the study's methodology. Specifically, I detail the purpose of the study, the research questions, research paradigm and design, methods and procedures and data generation methods. I will also discuss my role as the researcher, the data processing and analysis techniques, quality criteria, ethical consideration, and data management.

This inquiry employed a qualitative interview approach. This method was selected in order to gain rich descriptions of the ideal partnership arrangement between the School of Education at the University of The Bahamas, and the Ministry of Education, Bahamas, as they partner to improve principal preparation for the Bahamas.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to explore how practitioners/stakeholders understand the role of partnerships in the development of principal preparation programs. The literature has investigated partnerships in numerous ways; however, based on a review of the literature, no study has sought the insights of potential stakeholders about the ideal partnership. This study adds to the literature as it sought the perspectives of partners prior to entering the partnership. It is hoped that these perspectives can be used in the creation and implementation of the partnership. Further, these perspectives might help to produce a stronger partnership, and counteract some of the challenges of partnerships as outlined in the literature.

## **Research Questions**

This inquiry was guided by the following research questions: (a) How do educational stakeholders perceive the ideal partnership arrangement for the preparation of principals in The Bahamas? (b) In what ways do the perspectives of stakeholders reflect broader discourse about the quality of educational leadership preparation?

## **Philosophical Underpinnings**

Cohn et al. (2018) define a research paradigm as "...a shared belief system or set of principles, ... a way of pursuing knowledge, consensus on what problems are to be investigated and how to investigate them..." (p. 8). This study was guided by the interpretivist paradigm as it sought to understand the perspectives of stakeholders about the partnership arrangement, while investigating the stakeholders' sense-making processes, and what factors contribute to the construction of their perspectives. Interpretivists believe the individual and society are inseparable units; however, "it is possible to separate the two units for the sake of analysis" (O'Donoghue, 2018, p. 16). According to Denzin (2001), the participants in interpretive research share reports of reality so the researcher can understand the phenomenon as well as the social and contextual factors surrounding the phenomenon. Therefore, social interaction is the basis for knowledge. In this paradigm, the role of the researcher is to use their skills as a social being in order to understand how others understand their world. Further, reality is subjective, and there is no universal truth. To this end, as I constructed the interview protocols, conducted the semi-structured interviews, facilitated the virtual focus group, and analyzed the data, I kept these tenets in mind. I remained cognizant of these tenets so that I could uncover and document the participants' desired partnership arrangement. I was mindful that the participants' views,

perceptions, and stance are based upon their experiences with past partnerships, and or their involvement in the preparation program or professional development activities.

## **Research Design**

A qualitative interview study was selected in order to gain rich descriptions of the ideal partnership that could best facilitate principal preparation. Qualitative research involves collecting in-depth information, including quotes, verifying them, and determining what they mean (Patton, 2015). The data sources in qualitative research can include documents, observations and fieldwork, and oftentimes, interviews. Kvale (1996) posits: “If you want to know how people understand their world and their life, why not talk with them” (p. 1)? In support of this notion, interviews were used as the data collection method for this study. Interviews can be conducted with individuals, and with a group (Mertens, 2010). A focus group is an interview conducted with a small group of people, typically between six to ten people with similar backgrounds (Patton 2015). This study included interviews with relevant stakeholders from MOE and UB, and a focus group with MOE principals.

## **Methods and Procedures**

### **Setting and Participants**

This study was conducted in New Providence, The Bahamas during the months of February, March, and April, 2021. The participants consisted of three distinct groups of individuals: (1) educational leaders from the School of Education at UB; (2) relevant stakeholders from MOE, including senior MOE officers and district superintendents; and (3) current public school principals from various levels of the school system. Principals were recruited from various islands throughout the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. At first, I had hoped to conduct two focus groups, one with principals from New Providence, and the other

with principals from the Family Islands. Initially it was thought that since their duties and responsibilities and context varied, it might be beneficial to hear their perspectives in a separate focus group. Their views could be compared and analyzed with that of the New Providence focus group. This might have resulted in rich discussions regarding the ideal partnership agreement. However, due to the impacts of the novel coronavirus 19 (COVID-19), and the unexpected demands that were placed on principals throughout the Bahamas, many of them were not available to participate in the study. Moreover, I requested permission from MOE to conduct the study (see Appendix C), and permission to conduct the same was granted in December, 2020 (see Appendix D). As was required by the Internal Review Board (IRB), the necessary course was completed to engage in human subject research (see Appendix E), and I was granted IRB approval to conduct the study in January, 2021 (See Appendix F).

### **Participant Selection**

The participants in this study were purposefully selected. According to Patton (2015), purposeful sampling involves “strategically selecting information-rich cases to study, cases that by their nature and substance will illuminate the inquiry question being investigated” (p. 265). As stated above, the participants for this study included (1) educational leaders from the School of Education at UB; (2) relevant stakeholders from MOE, including senior MOE officers and district superintendents; and (3) current public school principals from various levels of the school system. The particular stakeholders from UB were selected as the preparation of teachers and school leaders is directly the business of the School of Education. Therefore, these individuals can intelligently speak on such matters. The stakeholders from MOE were selected as these senior MOE officers play a major role in planning and organizing preparation and professional

development activities for the principals. Further, district-superintendents, work closely with and are also responsible for mentoring and evaluating principals; therefore, their input was necessary.

In addition, the selected principals have served in their roles for at least three years and have participated in the IEL program at COB during that time. Further, I included current principals in this study because it was critical in my view, as the preparation programs and professional development activities will directly impact them, and future principals. These principal were also selected based upon the distribution of the population. Therefore, participants were recruited from numerous island in the Bahamas, inclusive of Abaco, Acklins, Andros, Cat Island, Eleuthera, Exuma, Grand Bahama, Inuagua, Mayaguana, and New Providence. Further, participants were recruited from various levels of the Bahamian educational system: primary, junior, senior, secondary, and all-age.

Excluded from this selection process were partners from other local or international colleges and universities, and principals from private schools, or schools and partners, outside of The Bahamas.

### **Recruitment of Participants**

I prepared a letter addressed to the director of education, informing him about the study, and seeking permission to engage senior MOE officers, superintendents, and principals in the study. This letter was emailed to the director and his secretary, as all government offices were closed due to COVID-19. Upon receiving permission, based upon the participant criteria outlined above, I emailed the district superintendents and principals as their emails are publically available, and MOE informed me that they would not be involved in the recruitment process.

The participants from UB were also informed via email about the study, and their permission was sought. Table 1 below outlines the study participants who participated in the



individual interview, and Table 2 represents the principals who participated in the focus group. All principals in the focus group have served as a principal for at least three years, and have all participated in and have completed the IEL program. One of the principals, Faith, served as a principal in New Providence and at a Family Island School. She participated in the IEL program while she was principal at a Family Island School. Further, all participants were female. Attempts were made to include male principals; however, of those contacted, none of them agreed to participate in the study. Moreover, in order to recruit suitable participants, the following steps were followed. Firstly, an email invitation (see Appendix I) was sent to all potential participants in early February, 2021, and twice more in two week intervals. This was done, as I didn't receive responses from key participants and some of the principals who were willing to participate in the focus group did not meet the inclusion criteria. Based on their response to the questions in the email invitation as outlined in Appendix I, I sent a follow up email to each participant informing them that they were selected to participate in the study, or they were not. Those who were not selected were thanked for their time and willingness to participate in the study. Those who were selected were emailed with the informed consent to participate in research form as seen in Appendix J. Further, all participants were then asked to inform me of their availability, so that we could arrange an interview time. Once the time was agreed upon, the Zoom ID and passcode was sent to the participants.

**Table 1***Demographics of Interview Participants*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Highest Degree</b>	<b>Affiliation: UB or MOE</b>	<b>Involvement with the IEL Program</b>	<b>Background in the Educational System</b>
Nicole	Educational Leader	Female	Ph.D.	UB	None	Served as teacher and Head of Department in MOE schools on various Family Islands
Andrea	Educational Leader	Female	Ph.D.	UB	None	Served as teacher and HOD in MOE schools on various Family Islands
Robert	Senior MOE Officer	Male	Unknown	MOE	Served as a facilitator in the program	Served as teacher and administrator (including principal) in MOE schools on various Family Islands
Vanessa	Senior MOE Officer	Female	Bachelors	MOE	Was a participant in the IEL	Served as teacher and administrator in MOE (including principal) schools on various Family Islands
Wendy	District Superintendent	Female	Masters	MOE	Was a participant in the IEL	Served as teacher and administrator (including principal) in MOE schools on various Family Islands
Pauline	District Superintendent	Female	Masters	MOE	Was a participant in the IEL	Served as teacher and administrator (including principal) in MOE schools in New Providence Bahamas

**Table 2***Demographics of Focus Group Participants*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Highest Degree</b>	<b>School Type</b>	<b>Island</b>	<b>Involvement with the IEL Program</b>	<b>Background in the Educational System</b>
Ruthmae	Principal	Female	Masters	Primary/Elementary	Andros	Was a participant in the IEL	Served as teacher and administrator in MOE schools on at least one Family Islands
Michelle	Principal	Female	Bachelors	High/Senior	Eleuthera	Was a participant in the IEL	Served as teacher and administrator in MOE schools on at least one Family Islands
Ericka	Principal	Female	Bachelors	Primary/Elementary	New Providence	Served as a facilitator in the program	Served as teacher and administrator in MOE schools on at least one Family Islands
Valerie	Principal	Female	Ph.D.	Junior/Middle	New Providence	Was a participant in the IEL	Served as teacher and administrator in MOE schools on various Family Islands
Faith	Principal	Female	Masters	High/Senior	New Providence	Was a participant in the IEL	Served as teacher and administrator in MOE schools on various Family Islands

**Data Generation**

Data sources included in-depth virtual interviews and a virtual focus group interview, using open-ended questions. Open-ended questions were asked as they are flexible, allow the researcher to probe for a more in depth response, and it provides an opportunity for the researcher to clear up any misunderstandings (Cohen et al., 2018). Virtual interviews were conducted with key stakeholders from MOE and UB. A virtual focus group interview was conducted with current principals in the public school system.

In the era of COVID-19, virtual interviews and a focus group was most appropriate as it supported the social distancing and stay at home protocols and mandatory lockdowns and

curfews that were in effect for the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, and much of the world at that time. Further, conducting the interviews and focus group virtually provided an opportunity for participants who resided on other islands in the Bahamas to participate in the study. Focus group interviews are more economical on time (Cohen et al., 2018), and by their very nature of being focused, provides more in depth information than a one on one interview, and it allows participants who might be uncomfortable in a one on one interview, a greater sense of empowerment to express their views (Coleman, 2012).

### *Interviews*

Kvale (1996) describes the interview as a social interpersonal encounter. It can accomplish what a survey cannot as it allows the interviewer and interviewee to explore the topic in an in depth matter (Cohen et al., 2018). Further, there are numerous approaches and types of interviews such as standardized, ethnographic, or life story interviews (Patton, 2015), structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews (Cohen et al., 2018; Coleman, 2012). The semi-structured interview was used in this study.

**Semi-structured interviews.** In a semi-structured interview, the researcher is consistent with the questions asked to each participant. However, based on the responses of the interviewee, the follow-up probe may differ (Coleman, 2012). Put differently, “in the semi-structured interview, the topic and questions are given, but the questions are open-ended and the wording and sequence may be tailored to each individual interviewee and the responses given, with prompts and probes” (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 511).

The interview protocols varied slightly for the individual interviews and focus group; however, all questions, excluding demographic and background questions related to their perspectives of the ideal partnership. (See Interview Protocols in Appendix G and H). The semi-

structured interviews were conducted virtually, via Zoom. The Zoom ID and passcode were emailed to each participant prior to the interview. The passcode protected feature allowed for enhanced security for the participants, and the Zoom wait room was enabled; therefore, participants entered the interview once I allowed them to do so. All interviews were conducted at an agreed-upon time, and lasted between 48 and 93 minutes, and the focus group lasted for 138 minutes. This resulted in a total of 580 minutes of interview time with the various participants. As outlined in the IRB, all participants gave verbal consent to participate in the study at the beginning of each interview. Moreover, they all agreed to have the interview recorded via Zoom. As a precautionary action, I took copious notes during each interview. I served as a Secretary for one of my professional organizations so taking minutes was a skill set that I developed rather proficiently. Hence, taking notes during the interview was like second nature for me and it helped me to connect with the interviewees, determine initial themes, and it served as a safety net in the event that the video recording malfunctioned in any way.

Patton (2015) recommends the taking of notes during an interview as they can serve several vital purposes. These include:

1. Notes taken during the interview can help the interviewer formulate new questions as the interview moves along, particularly where it may be appropriate to check out something said earlier;
2. Looking over field notes before transcripts are done helps make sure the inquiry is unfolding in the hoped-for direction and can stimulate early insights that may be relevant to pursue in subsequent interviews;
3. Taking notes will facilitate later analysis, including locating important quotations, from the recording; and

4. Notes are a backup in the event the recorder has malfunctioned or, ... a recording is erased inadvertently during transcription. (p. 473)

Furthermore, after each interview, the video recording was converted by the Zoom application into a mp4 video file. All videos were saved on my personal computer, the password for which is only known by me. Further, as a precaution, I also emailed a copy of each interview to my personal email address. Again, I am the only one who can access this account.

**Focus group.** Focus or group interviews first used for market research, are now increasingly used in the education community (Coleman, 2012). Approximately five principals, representing three islands (Andros, Eleuthera, and New Providence) and three levels of schooling (Primary/Elementary, Junior/Middle and High) participated in the focus group. Another principal from an All age school on a southern Family Island had agreed to take part in the study. However, during the time when we were confirming the time for the focus group, she did not respond. Two attempts were made via email to contact her, but to no avail. Coleman (2012) and Patton (2015) contends that six to eight is an acceptable range of participants for a focus group; additionally, the focus group should be conducted in a manner where all participants are comfortable, feel free to participate, and are encouraged to, and are given a chance to contribute (Patton, 2015). Throughout the focus group, I followed these recommendations and I worked purposefully to ensure that all participants were given an opportunity to give their input.

Similar to the semi-structured interviews, this interview was also conducted virtually via Zoom. Also known in the literature as internet focus groups, these interviews can be conducted either synchronous or asynchronous using an internet platform (Lee & O'Brien, 2012 as cited in Patton, 2015; Krueger & Casey, 2012). To this end, the internet focus group for this study were

conducted synchronously, with participants taking part in the interview together, and for the same amount of time (Coleman, 2012). The focus group lasted for approximately 138 minutes.

### **Role of the Researcher**

As the researcher of this study, it was my job to ensure the ethical dimensions of research were upheld throughout the course of the study. Much of these guidelines are outlined in the ethical consideration section below. However, while collecting the data via virtual interviews, whether they be individual, or in a group, my role as a researcher was paramount, as I am the research instrument (Kvale, 1996). To this end, prior to and during the interview, I maintained a good rapport with the interviewees. Prior to the interview, I ensured that the interviewees understood the purpose, time frame, and the contents of the interview (Cohen et al., 2018). During the interview, I remained polite, professional, non-biased and non-threatening, addressing the interviewee by his or her preference; that is by first or last name or by title (Cohen et al., 2018). I also displayed cultural sensitivities during the interview, noting that the agreed upon start time for the interview was slightly delayed for some, as a late start is common in the Bahamas (Coleman, 2012). Nonetheless, I was on time for all of the interviews, and waited patiently for the participant/s to arrive. One of the participants after agreeing to an interview time, forgot the appointment; however, we quickly rescheduled another time. I did so without making the participant feel badly or unprofessional about missing the interview time. In addition, I honored the personal preferences of each participant, such as allowing them to block their camera while on Zoom. It appears many persons are more comfortable when the video feature is off. Further, in keeping with the advice of Arksey and Knight (1999), during the interview I aimed to:

1. appear to be interested;
2. be a good listener throughout the interview, allowing the interviewee time to respond;
3. avoid giving signs of approval or disapproval of responses given;
4. willingly repeat questions when asked to do so;
5. ensure that I understand all responses, asking for clarity when needed; and
6. if a response is inadequate, but I believe the interviewee has more to say, I will tactfully probe for greater insight.

### **Data Processing and Analysis**

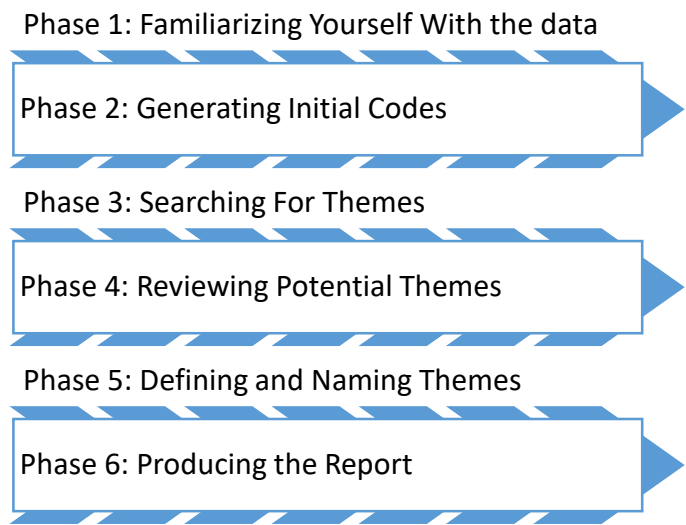
Upon collecting the data, all interviews were transcribed using Temi, an online transcription entity. To transcribe is to convert the audio recorded file to word or written form. Once I received the transcriptions, I reviewed each for accuracy. However, it was discovered that much of the transcription was inaccurate as words were missing or incorrect words or phrases were inserted. Some of the interviewees spoke rather quickly, coupled with the Bahamian dialect made it challenging for Temi to transcribe the interviews verbatim. Consequently, I spent appropriately 79 hours correcting the transcriptions so that all utterances were transcribed verbatim. Throughout this process I also began the analysis process by identifying initial themes. After the transcription was completed, I emailed the transcription to each interviewee for member checking. According to Coleman (2012), it is a good practice to allow interviewees to approve their interview transcript. Interviewees were given two weeks to review and approve their transcripts. Where necessary, corrections to the transcription were made. In cases where the interviewees did not respond in the specified time frame, it was concluded that they are in agreement with the contents of the transcription.



After reviewing the transcripts repeatedly, I used thematic analysis (TA) to analyze the data. According to Braun and Clarke (2012) “TA is a method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set...TA allows the researcher to see and make sense of collective or shared meanings and experiences” (p. 57). Further, I utilized the inductive approach to TA, where data coding and analysis is a bottom-up approach. To this end, the codes and themes were derived from the content of the data itself (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Moreover, I utilized the six-phase approach to thematic analysis, as outlined by Braun & Clarke (2006). These phases are listed in Figure 2:

**Figure 2**

*A Six-Phase Approach to Thematic Analysis*



In addition to this approach, I had intended to use the computer-assisted (or computer-aided) qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), NVivo to facilitate the analysis process (Cohen et al., 2018; Watling, James, & Briggs, 2012), as I had used it in the past. However, the University of South Florida no longer provides access to this CAQDAS, and due to the time restraints, I did not utilize another. Inevitably, as the researcher, I did the analysis, as NVivo or any other CAQDAS cannot analyze the data. Therefore, I used Microsoft Word, and paper and

pen to assist me with the handling of the data, and it served as a means for me to analyze the data in an efficient, inexpensive and less complicated manner.

### **Quality Criteria**

As the researcher, I was cognizant of my researcher bias. This awareness was coupled with the fact that I am also a member of the School of Education at UB, who is desirous of forming this partnership. Therefore, throughout the data collection and analysis phases of this study, I mitigated bias in several ways. Firstly, I employed within-methods triangulation by correlating data from interviews and a focus group (Denzin, 1970, 1978 as cited in Fusch et al., 2018). Rather than relying on interviews alone, the focus group allowed for further triangulation of the data, which decreased possible bias. Together, these data sources provided thick descriptions, while establishing triangulation through multiple data sources (Cho & Trent, 2006).

Furthermore, trustworthiness is crucial to qualitative research. The norms of trustworthiness include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Cho & Trent, 2006; Shenton, 2004). Specifically, credibility was established as suggested by Shenton (2004) through triangulation of participants. As I sought the perspectives of stakeholders about the partnership arrangement to prepare school leaders, I interviewed various stakeholders relevant to the partnership, from both entities, UB and MOE. Further, the district superintendents and principals were selected from various islands, and school level, which contributed to a “diversity of informants” and “site triangulation” as the views of participants from other islands in the Bahamas was voiced. In addition, I employed tactics to help ensure that participants were honest in their responses (Shenton, 2004). For example, I made the purpose of the study clear to all participants, they were encouraged to be open and honest with their responses, and I was absolutely clear to them that their participation is voluntary, not mandatory. During the

interview, I further encouraged the participants to be frank as there were no right or expected answers. Furthermore, creditability was achieved through the process of member checking, as previously described. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), member checking is critical in establishing credibility (as cited in Cho & Trent, 2006).

I established transferability by providing thick descriptions of the findings. In generating these thick descriptions, I asked open-ended questions and probe participants throughout the interviews and focus group. These thick descriptions is evident in the findings section of the study, where direct quotes are used to support the participants' perspectives. From these descriptions readers can determine if these findings are relevant or meaningful to their context or situation (Finlay, 2006). Dependability was achieved by including detailed descriptions of the methods used, so that other researchers can repeat the work if they choose to do so (Shenton, 2004). Moreover, I read and re-read each transcript to ensure that my interpretation of the data is situated in what was actually said by the participants. Moreover, confirmability was accomplished as I state clearly in the research my bias towards university-MOE partnerships to improve principal preparation (Morrow, 2005). This is a part of my researcher reflexivity. According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018) qualitative researchers are not neutral; "they have their own values, biases, and world views, and these are lenses through which they look at and interpret the already interpreted world of participants" (p. 302). Further, while conducting the study, I have recorded my shortcomings in the study's methods. These will be stated in the methods sections as limitations, and I will make known their potential effects on the study (Shenton, 2004).

## **Ethical Consideration**

Prior to the commencement of the study, the researcher obtained permission from the University of South Florida's Institutional Review Board. Study participants were treated with the utmost respect. I explained to them the purpose of the study, and that their participation in the study is not mandatory, but voluntary. Further, they were given the participant consent form, which also informed them that their participation was voluntary, and they can withdraw from the study at any time. Participants were assured that their names will be kept confidential, and all interview notes, and tape recording will be kept safely in the researcher's possession, and will not be shared with others. In addition, pseudonyms were used throughout the report of the study to protect the identity of each participant. There were no associated risk involved in taking part in this study, but the benefits of improved principal preparation through a partnership approach is measureless.

## **Data Management**

All interview data were secured on my personal computer, and not shared with anyone, except my dissertation committee, when requested. Further, the computer was password-protected, the password for which is only know by me. In addition, all identifiable qualities of the participant were removed, and all data will be destroyed after five years, in accordance with the IRB guidelines.

## **Overview**

In this chapter, I restated the purpose of this study and the research questions which guided the inquiry. In addition, I discussed the interpretivist paradigm which was employed to collect and analyze the data. Next, I outlined the research design, and other methods and procedural characteristics such as the participants and setting, inclusion and exclusion criteria,

recruitment initiatives, and the role of the researcher. Further, I detailed the data generation strategies, data analysis techniques, validation strategies, ethical considerations, and data management and handling procedures. In chapters four, the findings of this study will be presented.

## **CHAPTER FOUR:**

### **FINDINGS**

The purpose of this study was to explore how practitioners/stakeholders understand the role of partnerships in the development of principal preparation programs. The research questions were: (a) How do educational stakeholders perceive the ideal partnership arrangement for the preparation of principals in The Bahamas? (b) In what ways do the perspectives of stakeholders reflect broader discourse about the quality of educational leadership preparation? Further, the interpretivist paradigm was employed in this study as it sought to understand the perspectives of stakeholders about the ideal partnership arrangement, while investigating the stakeholders' sense-making processes, and what factors contribute to the construction of their perspectives. Moreover, a typology of partnerships for promoting innovation (Barnett et al., 2010) was utilized as the conceptual framework for this study.

In this chapter, I present the thematic findings of the semi-structured interviews and focus group with principals. There are four themes and four major findings presented below as I aim to answer the two research questions, but I will focus primarily on research question one in this chapter.

**Theme One-There is a need for training of school administrators in the Bahamas prior to starting the job.**

As previously stated, there is no formal training or preparation for school leaders in the Bahamas prior to becoming a school administrator. In most cases, an individual's performance in other roles and an interview determines if he/she is suitable for the administrative role. In support

of this notion of the need for training prior to starting the job, Principal Ruthmae explains “I think that the leadership program was an excellent one and I just wanted to be a part of it earlier. I felt that so many things I allowed to go over my head because I didn't know and that was my excuse. I just didn't know”. In this utterance, Ruthmae acknowledges that she did receive training, but it was after she was in her administrative role. Like many others, she believes that she would have been better prepared had the training been done prior to the appointment. I totally agree with her sentiments as leading a school is quite different from teaching or being a subject coordinator. How is it that teachers must have training prior to taking on their role, but yet the individuals who most directly influence teachers in their primary role of promoting student achievement and learning (Hallam, et al., 2010) do not require training prior to commencing their role. Furthermore, Robert adds:

So I'm very hopeful that we can have a proper, systematic, and robust program for training school administrators...So I would like it if we could do something that helps people to be more ready on day one, than they now are, and also that their learning curve, the periods of time to make up that learning curve is significantly shortened.

The participants made it clear that preparation is needed for all levels of administration, and not just for the position of principal. As suggested in the literature on principal preparation program models, there are numerous approaches that can be employed such as a two-year degree program (Keleman & Fenton, 2016; Khan et al., 2015; Tooms, 2007; Webber & Scott, 2010), an administrator/leadership certificate (Black et al., 2017, Luu, 2010; Ng & Szeto, 2016), and a diploma in instructional leadership (Mackinnon et al., 2019). While many of the participants in this study did suggested a training model similar to the IEL, it is very important for the partners to agree on a model/models that would meet their intended goals.

One major finding that emerged from this theme is that the participants felt that this training would be best facilitated by a UB-MOE partnership. Based on their experiences in the IEL program, they are confident with the partnership and are hopeful of its reestablishment.

Wendy explains:

I don't know if that's [formal training], something that The Ministry in partnership with UB would be interested in making persons do so that they have a better understanding of what is going to be expected of them when they take up that position; and they take that role because there are many persons who have no idea what they're getting into until after they get into it and then some of them regret that they would have made that step.

Throughout this finding, participants were adamant that there is a need for the partnership between UB and MOE to prepare principals. They address the current realities that many administrators are underprepared for day one of the job, and while MOE provides training and personal development after the appointment is made, the participants believe that some formal training is needed prior to the appointment. In support of this position, the practitioners/stakeholders believe that there is a need for the partnership as many administrators lack the needed training to be effective on the job. Further, they are hopeful about the partnership as they believe it will provide the needed training that will prepare administrators to do their jobs. Principal Ericka stated:

Well, I would say, I hope the partnership comes to fruition. I hope it's just not talk. I hope it comes to fruition because I think it is one that is critical and will greatly benefit our system, because we are going to have more competent, knowledgeable, innovative administrators who are current. They can lead in challenging times and turn these schools around because these students are our future. Therefore, we have to ensure that the



leaders who are leading these schools are competent enough so that their influence trickles down to the teacher, whose influence will trickle down to the students and we will have more productive students exiting our school halls who are going to contribute greatly to our country.

Principal Michelle also agreed with Principal Ericka. She adds, “I think Ericka may have mentioned it and I guess others may have also mentioned, the amount of persons who are now in positions, who did not do the IEL and you're seeing, I guess, the consequences of the lack of that training...” One of the UB participants also addressed the need for training and the partnership. She contends:

....but going forward, definitely I would advise that it is high time now that the University prepare a program to train administrators, I've already articulated too many of my concerns in terms of them putting people into these positions, without training and that's why we have all these issues.

Based on these submissions, we see that the participants value the IEL program and the positive impact it had on administrators in the past. They acknowledged its worth and would like to see the reestablishment of the partnership so that training initiatives can be reintroduced. It should also be noted that there were other training initiatives that were undertaken after the IEL, but the participants made no mention of these. They were convinced that a revamped IEL would meet the needs of the educational system and prepare school leaders to take on their new roles.

**Theme Two: The call for a UB-MOE Partnership to prepare school leaders.**

As seen in the literature on university-district partnerships in the USA, there was an ongoing call for university-district partnerships in the preparation of principals (Borden et al., 2012; Davis et al., 2005; Grogan et al., 2009). It was noted throughout the literature that

principal preparation programs were lacking and with a view to improve such programs, the university-district partnership was mandated and or encouraged (Acker-Hocevar, 2013; Grogan et al., 2009; Hunt, 2010; Phillips, 2013; Reames, 2010; Walker, 2015). Similarly, the results of this study suggest a partnership between a university and a principal governing body. To this end, the participants are also calling for a UB-MOE partnership as they believe in and have experienced the positive impacts of the past partnership. Moreover, in sharing her view of the importance of the UB-MOE partnership Pauline notes:

Partnerships are very, very important, and it is through these collaborative efforts that we are able to achieve goals in education because in any country you have restraint, budgetary restraints, human resources restraints, and so you look to persons to partner with to set and achieve goals for the institution.

This view is rather important especially for developing countries like The Bahamas, where resources are scarce. Therefore, partnering makes sense, but the partnership must be well defined and the goals must be clearly agreed upon by the parties involved (Barnett et al., 2010). Adding a much needed twist to the view of partnership that was not present in this review of the literature, one MOE participant noted:

...partnerships are kind of a double edged sword. You can establish some partnerships with some entities or individuals that work very well, and that bring benefit to both parties, or how many other parties are involved, where you feel like you're living and adding value, and that you're helping someone else and helping to add value to them, and then some partnerships are just completely, I would say a waste of time and I think the partnerships that I am saying are a waste of time are those partnerships where there's an unequal weighting or pairing. Additionally, when it's not an honest partnership, it's a

contrived partnership; it's a forced partnership where people are just participating because they have to partner with you, but not because it's a sincere effort to deal with that common goal.

Indeed, such partnerships exist, those that add value and those that do not, or what this participant describes as a contrived partnership. I would imagine that these latter partnerships don't last very long. Unfortunately, this review of the literature does not address such partnerships, but it seems that this new partnership should not have this issue as no one is forcing them into a partnership, but rather the participants themselves are calling for the partnership. Moreover, the major finding that supports this theme, and is directly related to the reestablishment of the UB-MOE partnership is communication.

When the participants addressed communication, they spoke about making sure that there is an agreed need for the partnership, and that the expectations for the partnership should be articulated in government policy and in a memorandum of understanding (MOU). In addressing that both parties agree there is an agreed need for the partnership, Principal Faith stated:

We have to see or identify that first of all, there is a need for the partnership, and MOE has to realize that with the partnership, they must determine exactly what they hope to achieve? She continues, the latter must be very clear; because if it's not clear, then the relevant partners won't see the need for the partnership. It has to be determined what gains are achieved as a result of the partnership.

In support of this point, Pauline stated:

There has to be collaboration to discuss what the needs are in order to address what we are looking for. There has to be a set of goals to be attained. What the goals are, and a

plan as to how we are going to accomplish them as partners. It can't be, this is what I want, you set it up because it has to be the coming together of minds, to determine what would be best. There must be collaboration to see what each party brings to the table.

From both responses, it is clear that the need for the partnership must be agreed upon by all partners. or else, the partnership would not come to fruition. More importantly, in their submissions, especially Pauline's, there is a need to determine the type of partnership, such as a vendor partnership model, a collaborative partnership model, or a symbiotic partner model (Barnett et al., 2010). Maybe the partners just want the University to offer the training program without any true collaboration, if this is the case, then they can agree on a vendor partnership model (Barnett et al., 2010). Whatever the decision, this must be determined from the outset so that partners are operating with a clear understanding and so that there are no unrealistic expectations of the partnership.

In addressing the need for the expectations of the partnership to be articulated in a policy, Robert posits:

Well, certainly what would have to be in place would be a proper design of what it is you want this program to do, and in that you would speak to some of the things we talked about, so that might take the form of an MOU that may take the form of some other kind of document that speaks to what this program must do, the goal of the program, the objectives of the program, who would be the people who would qualify, what would be some of the content that you would deliver, some of the skills that people should acquire at the end of the day, the assessment mechanisms and all this kind of stuff.

As Robert explains, these are all important aspects of the partnership that must be documented so as to ensure that the partnership achieves its intended purpose. Moreover, this MOU should be

designed jointly by the partners so as to ensure that they are all on the same accord. All that Robert has stated is confirmed in the descriptive literature on university-district partnerships. For example, partners can work together to co-construct the curriculum (Black et al.2017; Borden et al., 2012; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Gooden et al., 2011), and partners can collaboratively select program participants (Gooden et al., 2011; Kaimal et al., 2012; Korach, 2011; Martin & Clarke, 2017).

Similarly, Pauline and Nicole agree that a MOU is needed. However, in an attempt to make the partnership even more concrete, Andrea and Wendy contends that policy is needed. Wendy stated:

The first one would be policy. and let me tell you why, because when a new leadership [government] comes in, whatever was in place before they just throw it out of the window, and there are some good things that were in place that should remain, so for me, creating a policy that says, listen, this is something that we're going to utilize for the next 10 to15 years, regardless of the change in government or regardless of the change in administration.

Wendy makes a critical point here which plagues so many Caribbean countries like the Bahamas, many good ideas or programs are thrown out because of policy changes by the incoming government. Therefore, it is imperative to implement such a policy, so that work within the partnership won't be discontinued with a change in government. Certainly, this should and can be avoided. This finding adds to the literature as no study in this review of the literature addresses the challenges of university-district or university-MOE partnerships in this way. Undoubtedly, this problem is more dominant in context like the Bahamas and the Caribbean, but

this study brings light to the need to acknowledge such challenges, and how they can be avoided, so as to preserve the partnership, even in the midst of a change in government.

**Theme Three: Multiple Stakeholders should be involved in the partnership.**

The participants agree that in order for the partnership to be successful, multiple stakeholders should be involved. Generally, the participants believe that MOE officials at various levels, UB personnel, and to a lesser extent, the unions, school board, community partners, social services, parents and the police should be a part of the partnership. Providing input on who should be a part of the partnership and why, Wendy contends:

District superintendents, assistant directors of education, deputy directors, the director, all of these people have an idea of what the principal's role should be. There's not one person on that team who is an expert who knows it all because the perspective that I have, I'm on the ground. I am in operations. I make sure that the policies of the Ministry are carried out, but my superiors, the ADE [Assistant Director of Education], DDE [Deputy Director of Education] and the Director of Education, they are at the policy level, therefore they know the heart of the government and what the government wants to drive... your district superintendents, who are the operational leaders. We advise the Ministry of Education; we make sure that the policies of the ministry are accomplished. So you need at least one or two district superintendents on that, and I say that from a Nassau and Family Island perspective, because the role of the district superintendent on the Family Island is different from district superintendents in New Providence. You need your principals, a couple of them, especially those with more experience, because they would know the roles and not just principal of A schools with more than 800 children. You need a principal who has 30 children because they have to teach and lead. That's a different

dynamic altogether. So you'll have a principal, maybe of a Central Secondary school who has to manage a school from grades seven to grade 12. Then you have All Age school principal who manages a school from pre-school to grade 12. Therefore, all those perspectives have to be considered, and it doesn't have to be, where they come around the table, but perhaps they could be interviewed or given a survey, but they need to be a part of the process.

Also supporting the view that multiple stakeholders should be a part of the partnership, Andrea stated:

Students, teachers, administrators, parents and other community minded persons...from the Ministry of Education side, all those persons I mentioned the Ministry of Education can get their feedback, because they're connected to the Ministry as representatives of the government and the country. On the UB side, I think that it is vital for the school of education, to be a part of the partnership. Those persons who are trained in educational leadership in the school of education, who had some administrative and leadership experience in the schools. Then, we can involve the School of Business because they would offer leadership or policy courses that deal with business. There's a certain business aspect to leadership. You also have the School of Social Sciences... we have some legal aspects to being in leadership at a school.

Wendy and Andrea clearly address who should be a part of the partnership and why. They contend that there should be representatives from all levels of the Ministry, including principals from various school types throughout the islands of The Bahamas, and faculty from UB. Certainly partnerships involve groups of people coming together to achieve a common goal, so the fact that these participants are recommending that multiple stakeholders should be a part of

the partnership may seem trivial to some. However, this recommendation is crucial as the partnerships that are described in this review of the literature are not as complex as the one that these participants are proposing. By complex I mean that they are proposing a national initiative to provide training for school leaders for the entire country. To this end they want to ensure that all voices are heard, and all stakeholders are represented. Moreover, the literature provided examples of university-district partnerships between district representatives, faculty members, and students (Brooks et al., 2010), another between district leaders, faculty members and a local foundation (Korach, 2011), and Reed and Llanes (2010) describes a partnership between a faculty, the dean, and superintendents from seven partner districts. However, no study sought to include this coverage of stakeholders, the possible challenges of which will be discussed in chapter 5.

Principal Ericka also agrees that multiple stakeholders should be involved, "...definitely the executive management team at the ministry of education, along with a cross section of persons like superintendents, administrators and even teachers because some of them would aspire to be that first level administrator, which is either senior mistress or senior master."

Similarly, Nicole explains why multiple partners are necessary. She argues:

So we need a partnership where it includes all of those stakeholders. So everybody will hear and will know what it is we want, what the partnership is all about. They will have their input, and we will work on an ongoing basis. So there will be no reason to say, well, I didn't get that. I didn't hear that. When did that happen? Or it didn't come to me, I didn't get that communication. Everybody would hear it the same time...

In addition to the stakeholders who have already been identified, Principal Ericka expressed the need for teachers to be included in the partnership as they would eventually become school



leaders. This review of the literature does not address or provide examples of teachers being a part of the partnership, and honestly I am not sure that they will provide any additional value or input, as many of the other partners would have served as teachers in the past. In hind sight, I should have asked Ericka if there was any other reason why she felt teachers should be included in the partnership. In reference to Nicole's point about including multiple stakeholders, she believes that by involving these individuals they would be engaged in the partnership and be aware of what is happening, without the need for others having to inform them of what is happening. She notes that too many partners use not knowing as an excuse, when the information should have been trickled down to them.

Moreover, several participants, particularly the principals agreed that the Union should be a part of the partnership. The Unions in this case refers to the Bahamas Union of Teachers (BUT) or the Bahamas Educators Managerial Union (BEMU). Principal Faith initially petitioned for BEMU to be a part of the partnership, but she also agrees that the BUT should be invited. She states:

...I was really looking at BEMU, The Bahamas educational managerial union that incorporates administrators. But also we must realize that there are challenges between administration and the teacher's union, so why not invite the lead representative of The Bahamas union of teachers as well? I think it speaks a lot to teamwork. We are involved with one common goal and that is to create better administrators. So I don't see any harm in opening it up to the team membership there as well.

Principal Ruthmae further explains why the BUT should be a part of the partnership. She comments:

I wanted to explain why I also wanted to include the BUT as well, because I don't know if you realize it, but there are some principals that are not substantive in terms of their posting. Like the principals in my district, the principal of the preschool, they're still under the train teachers' regime, and so they are teachers, operating as principal, required to do work as principals, but they're known as trained teachers. And then also, I don't know if you realize it, but the senior assistant post, which is a movement onto principal, if you so desire, that's non substantive as well, although their trying to get rid of it or do away with it. And so they are still apart of the teacher's union as well.

While the participants agree that multiple stakeholders should be involved in the partnership, there was some tension regarding the participation of the BUT. One MOE participant contends:

Now, some people might argue that you could and should also have the unions in there because these are their people who are being trained, but first and foremost, I don't see our employees as the union people. They only have union membership because they are our employees. They are employees first, so for me, making decisions around what opportunities we have to train them and what is it that is expected out of them, I think, it's our decision to make solely. I think unions come in when there might be some kind of problem with what we're putting in. And so since this is being an optional training, certainly if it's being used as a gateway to access promotional opportunities, as opposed to if it's a condition of promotion, meaning it was something that you, you could get promoted, but this will enhance your chances...

In a similar view as to why the BUT might not be included in the partnership or only included under certain conditions or expectations, another MOE participant posits:

Normally, I would say yes. I would say yes, I guess from a framework perspective, yes! Now our unions as they stand here, they're not the best [referring to the BUT]. In the sense that what I've seen over the last five years or more is head budding, compared to a lot of other unions, where there was a collaboration, it was a partnership. But it is as if everything that the ministry puts forward, we have this head budding, but yes, the union should be involved if they're going to provide quality.

This review of the literature does not cite any instances where the teachers' or administrators' unions were included in the partnership, and neither does the theoretical framework address this matter. However, I do agree that both unions should be a part of the partnership and engaged in the preparation of any MOU or policy which governs the same. The Bahamas is a unionized nation and any matter that might alter the rights of the worker, is the business of the union. For example, if the policy states that training is required before an individual can be promoted to the level of a school administrator, this would change the terms of the workers' agreement.

Therefore, I think it would be a wise decision to involve the unions as it would lessen any industrial unrest in the long run, and most importantly, it would allow the unions to truly feel a part of moving education forward in this country, verses feelings that they are only a reactionary body who only opposes the government. Further, I believe this move of inviting the unions to be a part of the partnership will strengthen the Unions' relationship with MOE as they often feel that they are left out of the decision making process. In addition, inviting the unions to partner in this way will foster a new type of partnership with UB as UB and the unions have never partnered in this way before. UB has enjoyed a vendor partnership model with the unions, but the partnership that these participants envision will elevate the partnership to a collaborative

partnership model where the partners will “need additional time for initial dialogue and to reach mutually agreeable structures and outcomes” (Barnett et al., 2010, p. 25).

This theme of multiple stakeholders should be involved in the partnership has also produced a significant finding that is most useful to other nations who employ a centralized educational system and or are archipelagic nations. Not only were the participants in this study able to identify the partners who should be involved in the partnership, but they were also adamant that these partners should be representative of the islands throughout The Bahamas. This is critical as the participants explained that all islands have their differences that must be accounted for by those at the table. Who better can represent their needs and circumstances than the people themselves who live these realities every day?

This recommendation was strongly suggested by three of the family island participants. Principal Michelle captures their sentiments below:

First of all, I think it should be a broad spectrum of persons, not only from New Providence and Grand Bahama, but the family islands. Especially I have to say something and please no one get offended, but especially during this COVID era we became incensed that we were looked at as no bodies and all of the decisions being made for timetabling and everything else had to do with schools in New Providence. And we have different challenges and at first they didn't want to respect that and we just had to do what we had to do... I understand that they want everyone on the same page and et cetera, but everything is according to New Providence standard, in the sense that they'll use a school, a big school with over a thousand children and what they're doing, and then what we're supposed to do with 350 students when we don't need to be doing the same thing. So I think having family Island representation is very, very important because they

seem to miss the picture with family islands schools and everything is focused on New Providence schools...So I think to start with, we need to make sure that it's a broad spectrum of persons, and not just persons from New Providence.

#### **Theme Four: Possible Benefits and Challenges of the Partnership.**

When asked about the benefits of the partnership, a vast majority of participants agree the partnership will result in better prepared principals. Put differently they believe the partnership will better prepare principals, and administrators in general who are able to meet the demands of the job. Principal Ericka states:

...I think that the most important benefit would be we would have a more competent or knowledgeable workforce comprising of these educational leaders who will now be fully equipped to deal with the challenges of running a school, engaging stakeholders, motivating staff members, making sure that the instructional program is priority because student outcomes and improved student performance is the goal of education. And I think we are going to have more impactful leaders in these schools.

Similarly, Wendy cited better prepared principals as a main benefit of the partnership. She avers:

Number one, you're going to have better prepared principals. You're going to have people who without having done a whole lot cause when you come in as a principal, you would have been a vice principal before. So you have some leadership. But when you create the policies, create the framework, create the actual modules, have the apprenticeship. You're going to have better prepared principals who are current, solid. They can speak the language, but they not only speak the language, they can actually walk the talk. And I think that's the idea of the partnership that we have quality principals.

Further, Pauline and Robert also cited “stronger school leadership” as a benefit of the partnership. Put differently, Nicole states, “Well, I'm hoping once that gets off the ground, you will see a better run school. Yes. The principals know what needs to be done and how it should be done properly”.

Unequivocally, these participants believe that this partnership will produce better prepared school administrators who are effectively prepared to meet the demands of the job. I would say that this is also the intended outcome of the partnership. However, in order to achieve this benefit/outcome the partners would need to collaboratively design a training program and or degree program that is suitable for each level of administration. Collaboration to this end, is crucial as all partners will bring worthwhile information and experiences to the table that would prove beneficial to the design of the training/program. Moreover, as outlined in this review of the literature, connecting theory to practice is most important in the preparation of school leaders (Darling- Hammond et al., 2009; Sanzo et al., 2011; Wilson & Xue, 2013); therefore, this training/program should aim to do the same, providing opportunities for participants to engage in real life experiences. Moreover, an internship experience would prove beneficial to program participants as it would give them an opportunity to observe and practice theoretical concepts in a real life setting. In addition, observation while on internship is important, but some participants find it useless if it is not coupled with other hands-on learning experiences (Dodson, 2014).

In addition, the participants believe that the partnership could accomplish the goal of preparing school administrators for their various duties and responsibilities. Further, as they addressed this benefit of the partnership, they mentioned all school administrators, senior masters/ mistresses, vice principals and principals; therefore, I wonder if they are suggesting that there is a need for training prior to entering each role, or if there should be one required program

that would prepare school administrators for all roles. Perhaps they might wish to adopt the US model where all aspiring school administrators are required to hold a Master's degree in educational leadership, complete an internship, successfully pass a leadership examination, and obtain certification from a district (MOE in this case) aspiring principal preparation program (Black et al., 2017; Mendels, 2016; Young & Grogan, 2008). Further, they may wish to adapt the IEL model, but offer the program for aspiring administrators at each level. Whatever decision is made, it should be guided by policy and not the current practices, as these practices are not meeting the needs of the educational system as has been expressed repeatedly by the participants.

Where there are benefits or successes, challenges are inevitable. To this end, participants cited funding and a change in government and or partners as potential challenges for the partnership. Admittedly, these challenges did not come as a surprise to me as most of them are cited in this review of the literature (Browne-Ferrigno & Sanzo, 2011; Tooms, 2007). The only challenge that differs from the literature is that a change of government could be a challenge to the partnership. This dynamic will be further discussed in chapter 5.

Participants cited funding as a possible challenge for the partnership. Funding was explained as MOE is expected to pay for the training/program, or the administrators themselves are expected to pay. Robert explains:

I think funding of the program would be another issue. No doubt the university would want to charge for the program, probably even be considered kind of a cash cow kind of thing, because the demand for that would probably be kind of high... We'd have to look at who would fund that. Certainly for you [UB], it would be something that you would feel that you should make money from and from our end [MOE] we would need people, but, cost of doing it is something that will have to be right. If you were to tell us its

\$10,000 that we have to pay, on top of having to pay the person to come, that might make it difficult for us to expose a lot of people to it.

Principal Ericka further expressed how funding can be a challenge. She states:

I mean with the challenging times that we're facing now, especially, with this COVID-19 pandemic; there may be a lack of funds to do all that we want with the partnership.

Additionally, there may be some cut backs because of what we are faced with, because right now persons are not even getting increments in the Public service. So I just want to say, they're [government] going to look for any, I wouldn't say excuse, but I just find that a lot of good things get placed on the back burner when we are in tough economic times.

Therefore, the funding can definitely be a challenge.

In agreement, Andrea exclaims, “Of course funding is always the issue, but, nothing that can't be overcome. Where there is a will there is a way!” With a focus on funding as it relates to the administrators or teachers paying for the program/training, Nicole explains:

The challenge is getting persons to apply. What I have discovered and I hate to say this, they [teachers and administrators] don't want to pay for any of their education or any of their professional development. If the ministry is not paying for it, they're not going to do it.

Obviously there are numerous concerns and assumptions regarding the financing of the training/program. On one hand, Robert thinks that the University might want to make a tremendous profit from the training/program, and he is concerned about who would pay for it as in past experiences, MOE was the one to cover the cost. Similarly, Ericka acknowledges the challenging economic times we are faced with due to COVID 19. She is concerned that other



pressing matters will be placed ahead of financing this initiative. Nicole is of the opinion that regardless of the economic times, teachers and administrators don't want to pay for their professional development. While I agree that these concerns and assumptions are legitimate as I have experienced them first hand; I fully agree with Andrea's stance that "where there is a will, there is a way." To this end, the participants have expressed a need for the training and the potential benefit that it can have. They must now collectively come together and implement ways that these funding challenges (and other challenges) can be mitigated. Additional insight regarding this recommendation can be seen in the findings below, and further discussions will be given in chapter 5.

The participants also believe that a change in government and or partners might also be a challenge for the partnership. Principal Ruthmae avers:

I think one of the challenges could be that the vision of it all may not be transferred as leadership is transferred. When I say transferred like when people move on in retirement, and somebody else comes into position, meets something going on, not sure of its success, they didn't do the research and then they say, okay, that's too expensive. Let's get rid of that.

Similarly, Andrea explained the view of some individuals when there is a pending election.

Andrea comments:

So people already decide that, hey, but I'll just do a little bit right for now because well, next year the bell ringing, the government gone, new minister. So all of this going out the window, we have to stop that. We have to stop that.

Both Ruthmae and Andrea have expressed concerns about the continuation of the partnership in the midst of partners leaving or if the government changes. Again, these concerns are warranted especially in The Bahamas where it seems like a small group of people have all the power, and most things are political. Perhaps this is the reality in other small island states as well. However, I believe that all hope is not lost. I submit that a collaborative partnership model (Barnett et al., 2010) could help to relieve some of these concerns. With the collaborative partnership model, all partner work together to meet the goals of the partnership. Moreover, the partners engage in ongoing, intensive dialogue with each other and within each other's organization. In doing so, the vision and intent of the partnership is imparted to others in an attempt to gain their support. To this end, even if certain partners leave or there is a change in government, the already established partnership would have greater viability as it has gained the support and buy-in of others. This is another reason why the need for multiple partners is so important. Even in the midst of a change of government, there will also be partners who have the ear of the governing party. Moreover, as a people we elect the government and we must take a stand and hold them accountable for what we know to be needed practices and procedures that would advance our people. Certainly, this partnership is one that will.

Moreover, a major finding that emerged from this theme is that proposed benefits can be achieved and challenges can be overcome when we collaborate and communicate. This may sound so simple and insubstantial to some, but the truth of the matter is that collaboration and communication still works as no one partner or entity has all of the answers, but together we can accomplish our goals and overcome any challenge. This is what true collaborative model partnership entails (Barnett, et al., 2010).

The participants shared numerous challenges that might hinder the new partnership. However, when providing insights of how these challenges could be avoided or overcome, the majority of them gave recommendations which encouraged the partners to communicate and collaborate. Addressing the challenge of funding, Robert suggest, "...we would have to, both sides, would have to kind of sit down and figure out how we could do this so that we could attract the right people so that the program cost the right amount, so it can be affordable".

Also suggesting a collaborative approach, Vanessa propose that "it would take both partners to look outside of their scope, to seek funding". Certainly, these ideas are feasible and with these collaborate efforts the partners might even find donors who are willing to fund all or certain aspects or the training/program.

Moreover, Andrea also agrees that communication and collaboration is needed to address the challenge of a change of government or partners. She explains:

If we ensure that all of them [political parties/representatives] are sitting at the table, when those decisions are being made, then it means that it's more likely to continue no matter which government comes in power; and when the sitting government present these policies to the country their not patting themselves on the back and say, oh look what the PLP did, look what the FNM did! No, we call it bi-partisan. This is a bipartisan initiative. We have had members of the FNM, we had members of the PLP, we have independents, whatever. Everybody comes together and say, listen, this is good. This is good! And we put it out there like that to the public.

I am in full agreement with Andrea. Her position here aligns with what I stated earlier in this section regarding the need for multiple partners. Again, all political parties will be represented and they will have the opportunity to contribute to and develop the partnership.

Furthermore, Pauline posits:

I think building stronger partnerships can definitely mitigate many of the issues were having in education, but again, that comes from collaboration, that comes from shared goals. What is it we want to achieve? And we can only know what we need from each other if we have the conversation. I think a lot of what we see can be resolved if we have stronger bonds, stronger ties and ensure that we are on the same page all the time.

Again Pauline is also referring to a collaborative partnership model which will take time and much dialogue between all parties to develop (Barnett, et al., 2010). Again, this will be achievable as MOE and UB already enjoy a partnership and a certain degree of trust is already established. According to Barnett, et al., 2010 trust is an important ingredient in the collaborative partnership model.

Moreover, Robert called this open and honest dialogue. He argues:

I think I spoke about that earlier when I talked about open and honest dialogue. I think with the University and the Ministry, there would have to be a debriefing after perhaps every cohort, using exit surveys and whatever. So maybe it could be one of the ways to assess what students got at the end of the program, but also six months later, one year later, even feedback on the persons who have gone through the program and their effective or not, in the actual day-to-day operation.

What Robert is implying here is that there needs to be measures in place to ensure that the training/program is achieving its expected end results. What he has also described is the need for training/program evaluation over time to ensure that the intended outcomes are being met. This is extremely important as this information will give partners the information needed to know how to improve the training/program in the future.

## **CHAPTER FIVE:**

### **DISCUSSION**

The purpose of this study was to explore how practitioners/stakeholders understand the role of partnerships in the development of principal preparation programs. The literature has investigated partnerships in numerous ways; however, based on a review of the literature, no study has sought the insights of potential stakeholders about the ideal partnership. This study adds to the literature as it sought the perspectives of partners prior to entering the partnership. It is hoped that these perspectives can be used in the creation and implementation of the partnership. Further, these perspectives might help to produce a stronger partnership, and counteract some of the challenges of partnerships as outlined in the literature. Moreover, I encourage other partners to have similar discussions prior to the start of the partnership. In addition, they might find these findings beneficial to the creation of their partnerships as well.

#### **Research Questions**

This inquiry was guided by the following research questions: (a) How do educational stakeholders perceive the partnership arrangement for the preparation of principals in The Bahamas? (b) In what ways do the perspectives of stakeholders reflect broader discourse about the quality of educational leadership preparation?

#### **Conceptual Framework**

A typology of partnerships for promoting innovation was employed as the conceptual framework for this study. Developed by Barnett et al. (2010), this framework outlines the types of partnerships that can be development between a school, and its partners. These partnerships

include: (a) independent agencies, (b) vendor model, (c) collaborative model, (d) symbiotic partnership model, (e) spin-off model, and (f) new organization. In this case, UB represents the School and MOE and its stakeholders are the partners.

### **Discussion of the Findings**

In this section, I will discuss the findings as outlined in each theme. Later in this chapter, I will explain how these findings and the overall themes align with the literature and the theoretical framework.

In theme one, we observed that the major finding was that the participants believe that the training would be best facilitated through a UB-MOE partnership. This is powerful as the participants immediately stated this desire as they knew and experienced the benefits of the partnership then, versus what they see now with the nonexistence of the partnership. As expressed, they find that school administrators are not prepared for day one of the job as they lack the prerequisite training. Again, the UB-MOE partnership can provide this training. To this end, I fully agree with and support the position of the participants. UB as the leading tertiary institution in The Bahamas and MOE as the governing body of all educational matters in the Bahamas should come together and be the change for what is lacking in the country: prerequisite training and preparation of school leaders in The Bahamas. Quality education is an international concern and as Bahamians, we don't need another University to come in and offer a program once and then leave (Tooms, 2007). What we need in The Bahamas is sustainability and innovation in our education, one that this proposed partnership can definitely provide. In my view, this partnership would be a win- win for all and more importantly it would contribute to improvements in national development. Better leaders equal better schools and thus a better society (Hallam et al., 2010).

Based on this finding and the data throughout, it is evident that the Collaborative Model partnership type would best describe how the new partnership should operate (Barnett et al., 2010). To this end both partners should work in harmony to ensure that this is a true collaborative effort that aims to meet the mission and objectives of the partnership. UB and MOE already partner in their goal to prepare teachers. Like one of the participants said: “UB and MOE are partners for life.” As such this partnership would extend to prepare school leaders. Since both partners have successfully partnered for decades, and have developed a working relationship, coming together to determine a mutually agreeable structure and outcome for this partnership, although time intensive, should be achievable (Barnett et al., 2010). In addition, as the participants have expressed school leaders should be ready for day one of the job. Therefore, the partners must ensure that the training/program is designed to meet their needs and who best to be a part of these discussions than school leaders themselves. In this review of the literature, we see several instances where participants complained that their training did not meet their needs and they felt under prepared for their roles (Dodson, 2014; Johnson & James, 2018; Wilson & Xue, 2013). It is hoped that these partners don’t make the same mistake.

In theme two: The Call for a UB-MOE partnership to prepare school leaders, I observed that a major part of bring this partnership to fruition is communication. In this case, communication can be oral or written. When the participants addressed communication they spoke about making sure that there is an agreed need for the partnership and that the expectations for the partnership should be articulated not only in policy that is approved by the government, but also in a MOU. As previously stated and seen in the literature, many of the university-district partnerships in the United States were mandated as a way to improve principal preparation programs (Acker-Hocevar, 2013; Grogan et al., 2009; Hunt, 2010; Phillips, 2013; Reames, 2010;

Walker, 2015). Although the intent of these mandatory partnerships were good, I would imagine that there were some tensions in the beginning. Unfortunately, the literature does not speak to these tensions. Therefore, we do not know and neither can we learn from these experiences. However, in this study there is a call for the partnership by the potential partners themselves, and unlike those in the past, these participants did not say we need to enact policies to mandate a partnership. Rather, they see the need for the partnership and are lobbying that all potential partners come together to determine that there is a genuine need. Once the need is established, then the participants have suggested that the partners, not the government should come together and design policy that would later be approved by the government that would support the requirement for the training of school leaders in the Bahamas. The need for the policy to be enacted on the governmental level is critical as we don't want the training/program or partnership to be abundant when the government changes. In support of this stance, I noticed that in 2016 when MOE prepared its document entitled "Developing Effective School Administrators: Draft Proposal for a Comprehensive Management System for School Administrator" the committee recommended that all senior masters/mistresses would be required to take a revamped version of the IEL program at COB, now UB (MOE Draft Document, 2016). However, in 2017 there was a general election in the Bahamas, the government changed and this plan was placed on hold. Moreover, on September 16, 2021 the country had another general election, and the government changed again, but this time it is the same governing party who was in power when the 2016 draft document was prepared. Maybe this government will continue with its initial plan, but who knows for sure? This is exactly why I am in agreement with the participants when they say that an approved policy is needed, one that is bipartisan. Why should we have to rely on a government who can change every five years to dictate to us what we know



is the right step to take in order to turn our educational system around. Similarly, a new of extended MOU to guide the partnership is also recommended. As the participants strongly urge this is most important for the success of the partnership. Similarly, a collaborative partnership model is also described here as one partner does not make the decisions regarding the same, but it is a joint effort (Barnett, 2010).

Another finding that relates to theme three: multiple stakeholders should be involved in the partnerships is that the partnership should be representative of participants throughout The Bahamas. Again this finding is vital for the Bahamas and other nations with centralized education systems and geography as it addresses the need for having representatives at the table who can speak to their needs and realities. Lack of input or representation at the table was adamantly expressed by the Family island participants. Moreover, the literature cites the names of partners in some partnerships (Brooks et al., 2010, Korach, 2011 & Reed and Llanes, 2010); for example. However, the most complex of the partnerships in this review of the literature describes a partnership between a faculty, the dean, and superintendents from seven partner districts (Reed and Llanes, 2010). But that study never explained the importance of involving all these partners or the tensions and challenges that occur with partnerships of this multitude. That study and the findings of this study has me wondering about the tensions and challenges that could arise with the partnership that these participants have describe. Their ideal partners involve four separate organizations namely UB, MOE, the teacher's union, the administrators' union, and cadre of other stakeholders including parents, community partners, school board, social services, and the police. While the participants did explain that the latter partners may not necessarily be at the table, but only invited to give their input in a survey for example. I still wonder about the tensions and challenges that may arise. Will it be difficult to make decisions? Will the existing

tensions between some of the partners negatively impact the outcome of this partnership? Like Barnett et al. (2010) reminds us collaborative partnership models have a better chance of thriving when partners have experienced a favorable relationship in the past.

Theme four spotlights the possible benefits and challenges of the partnership. As seen in the literature benefits and or successes and challenges of the partnership is inevitable, but what isn't clear is how do we achieve these benefits/successes and overcome these challenges. The major finding in this theme is that we can achieve benefits/successes and overcome challenges if we collaborate and communicate. Again, this may seem so basic to some, but yet there are partnerships that don't survive as they never get to this point. The decision to engage in the collaborative partnership model implies that participants have decided to invest the time and energy to work with the team. Or should this assumption be made? The truth of the matter is collaboration and communication takes time and if the partnership is to thrive, reaping the benefits and overcoming the challenges the time to truly engage as partners must be made. The studies in this review of the literature neither did the participants in this study make mention of this fact. Actually, one of the participants did mention the need for setting meeting times for once or twice a semester. This might be reasonable once the partnership is up and running. However, in the initial stages of the partnership real quality time must be invested. I believe that this is a missing part of the literature and of this study. Partners need to understand that the initial work of the partnership such as creating the policy and the MOU could possibly take months. Are they willing to invest this time? Do they have this time to invest? Do they truly understand what is involved in true collaboration and communication? I think that this is a missing part of the conversation. Barnett et al. (2010) notes that one of the keys of a collaborative partnership model is that each organization should have a linking agent. More importantly, this linking agent should

be patience and have the ability to listen. While this is true and I totally agree, what Barnett et al. (2010) should also stress is that this will take time. Moreover, I would suggest that the partners of this proposed partnership should definitely identify linking agents from all partner organizations. In addition, the linking agents should be given the time to truly engage in the partnership. For the MOE and union linking agents, this might mean that they are given one day each week to commit to the establishment of the partnership, and the UB linking agent should be given a reduce class load. In my opinion such measures would affirm the partnering organizations' commitment to the partnership. In essence, they are giving the partners the time that they need to engage in the quality partnering that is needed for this type of partnering.

### **Discussions Based on Research Question Two**

In this section I will answer the second research question: In what ways do the perspectives of stakeholders reflect broader discourse about the quality of educational leadership preparation?

Related to research question two and how the perspectives of stakeholders reflect broader discourse about the quality of educational leadership preparation, although limited some of their perspectives are in alignment with the literature that addresses this focus. As seen in the review of the literature in chapter two, there were limited studies that sought participants' perspectives on the quality of their educational leadership preparation programs. The findings of this study adds to the literature, confirming some of the same concerns. Hopefully these findings can be avoided in the re-established partnership.

Firstly, some participants expressed concerns that the IEL program was too theoretical. They expressed that they would have liked to engaged on more practical elements that would prepare them for the day to day work that they would encounter. More specifically, they

suggested that an internship component of the training would be of greater benefit. This finding closer aligns with the phenomenographic enquiry conducted in Fuqing China where Wilson and Xue (2013) interviewed four principals and six duty principals to uncover whether or not their PDAs met their learning needs. Similarly, the participants noted that the PDAs emphasized theory, and failed to meet their learning needs. One principal stated: “I discussed some training programmes with my classmates. Most of us think that the training is too theoretical, offering too little in terms of skills or knowledge related to our practice” (Wilson & Xue, 2013, p. 808).

Additionally, these findings also align with the findings and recommendations of the participants of the Dodson (2014) study. Dodson (2014) focused on the field experience aspect of principal preparation, how principals perceived these experiences, and how these experiences could be improved. Findings revealed that most participants completed field experience as part of their preparation program, and they found their experiences to be valuable. Specifically, they valued hands-on practical experiences verses merely observing a principal. They found observation of principals to be useless. Further, in the Dodson (2014) study, as with this current study the few principals who did not complete a field experience expressed a desire to do so, as they believed this experience would better prepare them for their role as principal.

Secondly, the participants, namely those in the principals’ focus group were also adamant that they should be involved in the design of the curriculum for the preparation program. They contend that as a principal who has served in the other administrative leadership roles (vice principal and senior master/mistress), they would have a better idea of the skills and training that would be needed. This finding aligns with the scholarship of Wright and de Costa (2016) whose research finding supports the need for principals to be afforded the freedom to choose professional development activities that best meet their needs and interests. Participants in the

Wright and de Costa (2016) study provided conditions that they agree would support their professional learning. Some of these included: “2. involvement in professional development program design; [and] 3. ongoing and open communication between stakeholders” (Wright and de Costa, 2016, p. 41). Similarly, but to a different purpose, the participants of this study also recommended ongoing and open communication between stakeholders.

### **Alignment of Findings to the Theoretical Framework**

As previously stated, a typology of partnerships for promoting innovation was employed as the conceptual framework for this study. Developed by Barnett et al. (2010), this framework outlines the types of partnerships that can be development between a school, and its partners. In this case, UB represents the school and MOE is its partner. These partnership types include: 1) independent agencies, 2) vendor model, 3) collaborative model, 4) symbiotic partnership model, 5) spin-off model, and 6) new organization. A depiction of the types of partnerships is displayed in figure 1 below. Based on the findings of this study, it is believed that a collaborative partnership will emerge as the participants’ perspectives of the partnership aligns best with this partnership type.

The collaborative partnership is characterized by “intensive and sustained mutual exchange and benefits (Barnett et al., 2010, p. 25). As explained in the findings, the partners anticipate and are hopeful about working together to prepare school administrators. They are committed to working together to accomplish this goal. With multiple stakeholders at the table, they plan to communicate and collaborate as they develop effective trainings/programs for all participants. In addition, the collaborative partnership requires a greater investment of time, trust-building, patience, mutual understanding, and a shared viewpoint. To this end, the findings confirmed that there is a need for the partnership and participants are hopeful to engage in the

partnership. They believe, that together they can effectively prepare school administrators to meet the demands of the job. Put differently, this is their mutual understanding and shared viewpoint. Further, participants agree that policy and a MOU is needed to govern the partnership. This also represents a mutual understanding and shared viewpoint of the prospective partners. Moreover, a collaborative partnership is developed over time, and can take a longer time to develop if the partners had not developed trust in their past relationships or interactions. Further, once developed, sustaining this level of partnership requires mutual exchange and benefits, and both parties must invest in the partnership over time (Barnett et al., 2010). As evident in the findings, the participants were partners in the past, working together to offer the IEL program, further they remind partners as they partner in the preparation of pre-service teachers. Based on the findings, it appears that the partners are willing to work together and invest that time needed to develop this partnership into a truly collaborative one.

Eventually the partnership could transition into a symbiotic partnership. Barnett et al (2010) contends a symbiotic partnership model typically develops from a collaborative partnership; however, there are mutual goals, objectives and policies which are developed together, and can only be accomplished through the joint efforts of the partners. Based on the findings, it appears that this will happen very early in the partnership. However, another unique aspect of a symbiotic partnership is staff who may be on loan or newly hired to facilitate the work of the partnership. This aspect was not addressed by the participants, but it could be a possibility as the partners commence their work.

### **Implications for Theory**

A major implication for theory is that there is a need for a policy in The Bahamas which clearly outlines the preparation requirements for school administrators in the public school

system in the Bahamas. This is critical as the progress of these initiatives have been adversely affected by the change in government. Hence, if policy is implemented the plans will continue throughout governments and administration. In addition, the policy will help to guide the work of the partnership, in that it can assist the stakeholders in determining the training and or program model that should be used. For example, if the policy adopts or is similar to the US model for school administrators, then the partnership can focus on aspiring school administrator preparation at the various levels of school administration in the Bahamas, and it can also work towards the design and implication of a Master of Education degree in Educational Leadership/Administrative Leadership. Moreover, I have provided additional suggestions to this point in the recommendations section below. Moreover, I have provided additional suggestions to this point in the recommendations section below.

Relating to the issue of funding for the trainings/programs, the University can also assist by lobbying the government and its private partners to change its current policies relating to the distribution of funding to students at the University. Presently, only degree seeking students at the undergraduate level are eligible for funding. However, there is a tremendous need for funding opportunity for teachers/administrators, many of whom are unable to receive this training without the financial support. The government and donors must acknowledge that teachers and administrators are amongst the lowest paid professionals in the country, and until this changes, their financial support by way of scholarships is critical. Further, similar to how the government pays two-thirds of the tuition for those teachers who return to UB to complete their Bachelor of Education degrees, the same courtesy can be extended to aspiring or serving administrators.

## **Implications for Practice**

As the participants discussed the need for the partnership, they were adamant that preparation is needed prior to school administrators taking office. Some participants further suggested that a training of sorts should be a pre-requisite to obtaining the job. Currently, no formal training is given or required prior to becoming a senior master/mistress. Therefore, once decided upon, this decision will impact the eligibility for the job. More importantly it calls for policy design and implementation to undergo the same. Recommendations relating to this point is further discussed in the recommendations section of this chapter.

Another implication for practice relates to the issue of funding. Currently, MOE has a budget for professional development of teachers and school administrators. Based on the findings of this study and the need for better prepared administrators for day one of the job, there is a need to revisit the use of the professional development budget and reassign those funds to activities that would better serve the need of developing better prepared administrators for entry at the various positions. Certainly, this is a goal that can be accomplished in partnership with the University. Moreover, the government and private donors provide scholarships to the University, but primarily for undergraduate studies. However, based on these findings and the fact that this is a national need, UB can advocate and petition those donors to extend the funding to school administrators as well; thus changing the current practice. The challenge for some might be that many of these individuals have received funding before for their undergraduate studies in the past; however, they should be awarded once again as they are building a nation and are in need of this knowledge and skill-sets in order to do so. As a reminder, school administrators play a pivotal role in student achievement and learning “by influencing those with more direct interactions with students, primarily their teachers” (Hallam et al., 2010, p. 5). Moreover, as



currently done, in the public service, these individuals can be bonded to the government, remunerating the government with time on the job. Further, as outlined above this matter also has implications for policy.

A major implication for the partnership is that there is a need for continuous communication and collaboration between the partners. The participants agree that the challenges of the partnership can be mitigated or overcome through communication and collaboration; therefore, from the inception of the partnership the partners must agree on the importance of communication and collaboration. It should not be that the partners meet at the beginning of the partnership to organize its affairs, and after this point UB takes over as the program/training would be facilitated through the University. Unfortunately, this is what sometimes happens as partners get consumed with other equally urgent work, duties, and responsibilities. Hence, there should be standard meeting times as agreed by the partners, and the understanding that there will be emergency meetings as needed. Either way, the partners should schedule meeting times to build relationship and trust, discuss the progress of the program/training, and to re-evaluate the partnership and or program. Moreover, the partners should decide upfront on the frequency and length of these meetings, for if this is not decided, there is a strong possibility that the meetings just won't happen. In addition, these meetings might be as frequent as once per month or as infrequent as four times a year.

### **Recommendations**

The recommendations in this section are inspired by the findings of this study, the literature in the field and my personal convictions. These recommendations are listed below in the following sub-headings: Recommendations for the Partnership and Recommendation for the Preparation Program/Training:

## **Recommendations for the Partnership**

As it relates to the need for a policy which governs school administration preparation for the Bahamas, it is recommended that input is garnered from various stakeholders including school administrators, MOE and UB officials and other individuals who are experts in the area. Moreover, while this study only focused on a partnership between MOE and UB, the policy creation and all aspects of the partnership should also be extended to the private and independent school bodies throughout the Bahamas, as we are educating an entire nation, and the preparation of school administrators in all sectors is critical to achieving this goal. Further, advice should also be sought from international and regional organizations who are adept in the field. Moreover, the policy makers are encouraged to search the literature in the field and other regional and governmental policies so as to fully understand and become aware of the available options for school administrator preparation. With this knowledge, stakeholders can come to the table better informed and able to create policy for the Bahamas, being mindful of our needs, geographical and cultural peculiarities.

Again, The Bahamas needs policy to guide the preparation of school administration in The Bahamas. Once the policy is established, the work of the partnership can be grounded in meeting the requirements/expectation of the policy. Further, I recommend that the partnership is grounded on the work of Miller et al. (2011), who posit: “What we need is a new philosophy for grounding the new preparation programs- one focused on creating (1) collaborative systems that link all stakeholders both vertically and horizontally and (2) leaders who can build the leadership capacity of the organization and its members” (p. 43). Closely related to these perspectives is the scholarship of Austin (2002) who provides five principles for effective cross institutional partnerships. The five principles are:

1. ensuring participation;
2. building relationships;
3. creating value;
4. accountability; and
5. keeping the torch lit.

I believe that these understandings will be beneficial as the partners re-establish their partnership to prepare and train school administrators for The Bahamas. These tenants align with one of the major findings of this research: communicate and collaborate. Therefore, I believe if the partners operate in accordance with these tenants, the partnership will survive and thrive. Additional recommendations for the partnership include:

- Partners should take time to develop trust in the relationship. This will strengthen the partnership and result in improved communication and collaboration;
- Include multiple stakeholders in the partnership. Partners should include representatives from MOE, UB, BUT, BEMU, community partners, and current principals. The principals are listed separately and apart from MOE so as to ensure that their participation is not overlooked. They are serving in this position and have served at the other levels of school administration in many cases; therefore, their input in the partnership is critical.
- The partners should not be limited to persons who reside in New Providence. Rather, partners should be sought from throughout the Bahamas as their needs are different and should be represented at the table;
- The partners should agree on regularly scheduled meetings and not leave the meeting to chance;

- Both UB and MOE should appoint a coordinator/liaison who would be responsible for partnership. Together, these individual can co-chair the work of the partnership.
- Annually the partnership itself should be evaluated by all partners. This should be done to assess the partnership and implement ways to improve/strengthen the partnership.

### **Recommendations for the Program and Training**

As previously stated, all MOE participants were familiar with the IEL program. I believe this contributed to their view that the training program should be similar to that. Namely, they suggested a certificate or diploma structure for the program, while the UB participants agree that a Master's degree level program would be better suited. To this end, I recommend that the partners and stakeholders agree as to the goals of the program, this might help them to agree upon a suitable program structure. Further, they should study other regional and international program structures to retrieve ideas that could be adapted for the Bahamian system. As a University seeking international accreditation, UB must remain mindful of these requirements. However, both partners, MOE and UB must come to a decision that will meet the needs of the school leaders, and that will be financially sustainable.

On the matter of who should design the program/training curriculum, recruitment of participants and teaching of courses, I highly recommend that the partners from MOE and UB discuss this matter extensively, considering their anticipated roles in the partnership, the needs of administrators/principals in the Bahamas, international and global standards and trends, and the overall goal and objective of the partnership. If they are convinced that these roles should only be the responsibility of MOE, then there is no need for the partnership with UB. In addition, once both parties agree that these roles can be fulfilled together, then the partnership can commence. In addition, the partners must agree on the focus or type of training and or academic programs

that will be facilitated through the partnership. If they envision a training model, or an academic program approach such as a Master of Education in Educational Leadership/Administrative Leadership or both, then there are various aspects of each initiative that needs to be considered. Based on the findings, MOE participants are more concerns about the training/program meeting their day to day needs, UB as an institution seeking international accreditation might be more interested in meeting international standards as it relates to the teaching of these courses, if it is an academic program. Therefore, persons teaching in the academic program would need to be credentialed in the field, and hold terminal degrees. Further, if the partnerships seek to provide training and academic programs at the graduate certificate or master degree level, then they may wish to adapt the model as employed at the University of South Florida, where the University offers the Master of Education in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, and a professional development training course for aspiring principals, the Gulf Coast Partnership Resident Program (Black et al., 2017).

Further to the discussion on who should teach the courses or facilitate the training, the UB partners agreed that any faculty at the University with the required expertise should be invited to teach the courses. Again, most of the MOE participants felt that the courses should be delivered by MOE personnel or individuals identified by them. It seems that the MOE stance stemmed from their involved in the IEL, and the fact that some of the professors at that time could not fully connect or transfer some aspects of the content. To this end, I recommend that the partners identify qualified persons from UB and MOE who can assist with facilitating the training/program. Depending on the nature of the training/program certain qualification such as a terminal degree in the area can be relaxed. Moreover, the partners should also consider team

teaching/facilitation of the training/courses by both UB professors and MOE partners. Perhaps this would assure MOE that the necessary practical aspects are presented and acquired.

Addressing the delivery of the courses, Family Island participants in particular made mention that the courses and or training session must be accessible to them. They expressed that they cannot leave their schools for training opportunities in Nassau (the capital). To this end, in deciding on the delivery of the training/courses, the partners should utilize a virtual platform, even beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. This would allow participants from throughout the Bahamas and the region to participate. Furthermore, providing virtual opportunities would extend the reach of the preparation and professional development opportunities while reaching markets that were untapped in the past. This could also assist with the funding challenge as participants from throughout the world could take advantage of the opportunity.

From the literature we see that effective principal preparation programs should include an internship component (Grogan et al., 2009 & Walker, 2015); furthermore, in reminiscing on their experience in the IEL program, many of the participants stated that the program would have been more beneficial if there was a practical component to the program where they could practice these skills with the guidance of a qualified administrator. Undoubtedly, they are calling for an internship component of the program, and while the participants cited that this is needed, some agreed that it could present a funding challenge, as teachers/administrators would need to move away from their home school to complete the internship at another school, and in some cases veteran administrators who may be required to serve as mentor may be retired or pending retirement. Indeed, these are possible challenges to the internship initiative. However, I believe there are qualified school administrators at each school and these individuals can serve as mentors to aspiring administrators in-house. Moreover, in assigning teachers/administrators for

internship, the partners can work closely to ensure that where internships cannot be facilitated in-house, that there is an even transfer of teachers/administrators being assigned in the various schools. The intent is to ensure that no school is disadvantaged in anyway. Moreover, depending on the program/training module, the length of the internship can vary, and it can be facilitated at various times throughout the school year, and even in the summer where summer school is operational. In addition, a training program for the administrator mentors must also be designed and implemented. We cannot assume that because they are expert/quality administrators that they will be effective mentors.

### **Limitations and Future Research Directions**

A limitation of this study is that there was only one male participant, whereas additional male input could have provided greater or different insights. Future studies will seek to engage an equal representation of participants. Secondly, the participants only represented four of the major inhabited islands. Certainly, since we desire to prepare principals for all islands of The Bahamas, input from the other islands of the Bahamas is essential. Due to the unprecedented demand on principals and other MOE officials brought about by COVID-19, many of them did not respond to the invitation to participate in the study. Moreover, if the travel restrictions were not in place, I would have traveled to some of the Family islands to conduct interviews and focus groups with the principals and other MOE officials. A third limitation to this study is that the teachers' union and the administrators' union were not invited to participate in the study. They too are major stakeholders in the field, and in hindsight they should have been invited to share their perspectives. Future studies will seek to include these stakeholders.

Listed below are my recommendations for future studies. These studies will further advance the work of school administrator preparation and professional development in The Bahamas and in the region:

- There is a need for a mixed methods study which seeks the perspectives of all stakeholders about the partnership arrangement for the preparation of principals in the Bahamas. The current study utilized a qualitative interview approach which has provided a wealth of insights. However, to be inclusive of those stakeholders who were not included in the current study, this mixed methods study would give them an opportunity to share their perspectives. Further, with the ongoing demands of COVID-19, perhaps some stakeholders would be more likely to answer a ten-to-fifteen-minute survey as opposed to a sixty minutes' interview or a focus group that could take two hours. Nonetheless, this study would also employ short interview opportunities for those who are able to do so.
- This study focused on the preparation of school administrators in the public school system. However, the preparation of school administrators in the private and independent schools in The Bahamas is equally important. Therefore, the proposed study will garner their views regarding their preparation and training needs. This study would also address the need of a multi-institutional partnership between UB, MOE, and the private/independent school bodies.
- There is also a need for a study where current school administrators can evaluate and give feedback on their current training/professional development activities. This study can shed insights on what is currently being done and its effectiveness.



This would be useful as partners plan and create additional training and professional development opportunities.

- There is also a need for a follow up to this research. A future study might chart the development and implementation of the partnership, and a latter study could garner the perspectives of participants about their experiences in the program/training initiative.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study is significant in that it is the first and only study to address the need for principal preparation in the Bahamas. The findings and recommendations of the participants, if implemented will revolutionize principal preparation and education in the Bahamas. With the implementation of the recommended policy and MOU, the partnership between MOE and UB will quickly come to fruition. Moreover, the participants of this study are in influential roles within MOE and at UB. Therefore, they can promote within their circle of influence, the need to improve the quality of principal preparation through the mechanism of a MOE-UB partnerships. Moreover, this study provides practical advice and insights regarding the challenges that the partnership might incur and ways that these challenges might be overcome. No other study has accomplished this. By being aware of the possible challenges and knowing how these might be overcome or mitigated, the re-established partnership already has a greater chance of surviving and thriving. Again, this study is sole study that addresses administrator preparation in the Bahamas with a focus on a UB-MOE partnership, and based on this review of the literature, it is the only in the Caribbean as well. Therefore, this study will also contribute to the body of literature in the Caribbean, and it might provide insights and recommendations that can be

adapted to other countries who desire to create new partnerships or reestablish or improve existing arrangements.

### **Personal Reflection**

Admittedly, this topic was not my first choice for this dissertation, and I struggled at first trying to make sense of why I was doing it. However, I quickly realized that it was a divine intervention which led me to this topic. In speaking with the participants, and listening to their excitement about reestablishing the partnership and the need for training of school administrators prior to starting the job, it reconfirmed for me that this study goes beyond a requirement for a PhD, rather, it will contribute to the advancement of a great developing nation, and others who are similar or can relate. As stated in chapter one, after completing my studies, I am expected to reestablish the IEL program or something with a similar goal or focus. At the time that this expectation was thrust upon me, I did not realize the importance of the partnership between UB and MOE to execute this goal. The in depth review of the literature that I conducted on principal preparation in general and principal preparation in partnerships between universities and district has opened my understanding to the importance of these partnerships and the successes and challenges that they can endure. This study has further enlightened me of the possible challenges and how they can be mitigated. I strongly believe that this study has better prepared me for the work that lays ahead, and it can serve as the building blocks to the reestablishment of the partnership. Like the participants, I am eager and excited about the work ahead.

This study was conducted in the midst of a global pandemic, COVID-19, and with all that was happening around me, including the loss of several love ones including my brother, aunt, and a student, I felt like giving up many times and sometimes, it just didn't feel like it was worth the stress or time away from my husband and young children. With the uncertainties of the world

around me, I couldn't help but to wonder if my sacrifices would be worthwhile in the end, or would I have regrets, I struggled with many mind battles, but by the grace of God and a wonderful team of family, friends, co-chairs, and a committee who supported me, I never lost hope. COVID-19 also opened my eyes to the possibilities of data collection in an archipelagic nation. I never imagined conducted an interview or focus group that wasn't face to face. Virtual platforms such as Zoom has provided that opportunity for me to reach participants that might have otherwise been inaccessible. Funding was a challenge for me, but Zoom made it possible for me to reach participants on other islands of the Bahamas without having to incur any other cost. Truly, this was a blessing. Moreover, in my opinion, the use of Zoom and the virtual interviews helped participants to better understand the possibilities and benefits of the virtual delivery of training and professional development programs. The IEL and other training initiatives were face to face, but as a result of the pandemic, we are all more open and inviting of learning in the virtual environment.

In closing, over the past two years, working on this dissertation has taught me to press, pace myself, remain positive and faithful to the things of God, and He will grant me favor. Moreover, I have a better appreciation and understanding of the scripture found in Philippians 1:6: And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

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**APPENDIX A:  
SAMPLE PROGRAMS**

**Table 1A: UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI ST. LOUIS (UMSL)  
PRINCIPAL PREPARATION PROGRAM SCOPE AND SEQUENCE**

**APPENDIX C**

**UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI ST. LOUIS (UMSL) PRINCIPAL PREPARATION PROGRAM  
SCOPE AND SEQUENCE**

COURSE/ACTIVITY	OUTCOMES	COMPETENCIES	ASSIGNMENTS	CREDITS
<b>Year 1 – Fall</b>				
6701 - Leadership for Equity (XL <sup>15</sup> : 6201)	Establish personal leadership development goals Increase commitment to equitable outcomes for students	1.1, 1.2, 1.3a (team level), 1.4c, 3.1 3.1c, 3.2a (esp. focused on self)	A1. Complete initial leadership reflection and self-assessment A2. Build on A1, completing a written personal reflection	3
6702 - Supervision of Instruction I (XL 6401)	Build skills in identifying rigorous instructional practice and providing feedback to teachers	2.1 a-b, 2.3 a-b	B1. Classroom observation and feedback as peer, with focus on rigor of instruction	3
School Visits	Learn effective leadership practices connected to Leadership for Equity and Supervision of Instruction I from three school visits	3.1, others TBD from list above		n/a
<b>Year 1 – Winter Intersession</b>				
6703: Vision and Mission I	Build skills in developing and communicating a vision and mission for student success	1.2, 1.3a (school level), 1.3b, 1.4 a-c, 3.1	TBD	3
<b>Year 1 –Spring</b>				
6704: Data-Driven Instruction & Team Leadership I	Build skills in leading adults through a cycle of data analysis and use	2:2 a-c 3.1b	C. Organize team, identify data and analyze, name problem of practice (could be case study and/or "real" data), create and monitor plans to address	3
6705: School Culture I	Learn strategies for effectively supporting student social and emotional learning, increasing student voice, and engaging families	3.4, others TBD	D. Implement a classroom-based family engagement strategy aligned to SIP, collect data, present results	3
School Visits	Learn effective leadership practices connected to DDI & Team Leadership and School Culture from three school visits	3.1, others TBD from list above	TBD	n/a

XL=Crosslist

**TABLE 1A: CONTINUED**

COURSE/ACTIVITY	OUTCOMES	COMPETENCIES	ASSIGNMENTS	CREDITS
<b>Year 1 -Summer</b>				
6706: Diagnostic and Strategic Planning (XL: 6203)	Apply skills in developing, communicating, and implementing a vision and mission for student success  Learn and apply skills in diagnosing school conditions and data and developing action plans to address problems	1.2, 1.3a (school level), 1.3b, 1.4 a-c, 3.1  2.2a, 2.2b (building level), 4.1	TBD	3
6707: Supervision of Instruction II (XL: 6411/6415)	Acquire certification to conduct teacher observations; build skills in having difficult conversations about practice  Evaluate the quality of curricular strategies based on research	2.3, 4.2  2.4, 2.5	B2. Difficult conversations role play ** Complete certification as trained teacher evaluator  E. Evaluate a proposed curriculum or strategy based on research	3
<b>Year 2 - Fall</b>				
6708: School Culture II: Equity and Cultural Competence (XL: 6503)	Learn and apply strategies for effectively supporting student social and emotional learning, increasing student voice, and engaging families  Learn and apply systems and structures for creating equitable opportunities for students	3.4, others TBD  3.2 (b in particular)		3
6709: School Law and Regulation (XL: 6205)	Understand legal issues and compliance requirements common to all school leaders (including special education compliance)	4.5b	TBD	3
6710: Residency I	Practice leadership actions across a range of competency areas		A1. Conduct diagnosis of school's practices A2. Establish goal and action plan for one academic focus area and report on progress  B1. Complete first cycle of data analysis and use for a grade level team or department  C1. Complete first cycle of teacher observation and feedback, including identifying and communicating growth areas C2. Complete second cycle of teacher observation and feedback, including identifying and communicating growth areas C3. Facilitate/ videotape leadership of PLC session	3

**TABLE 1A: CONTINUED**

COURSE/ACTIVITY	OUTCOMES	COMPETENCIES	ASSIGNMENTS	CREDITS
<b>Year 2 – Winter/Spring</b>				
6711: Data-Driven Instruction and Team Leadership II	Build skills in leading adults through a cycle of data analysis and use, including supporting the professional learning of teachers	2.1, 4.4		3
6712: Management of Organizational Systems (XL: 6203/6204)	Learn and apply strategies for effective management of school operations, including budgeting, staffing and safety	4.5a		3
Residency II  <i>Note: Not a separate course for credit in this semester</i>	Practice leadership actions across a range of competency areas		A5. Report on progress against two goal areas (academic and culture)  B3. Complete third cycle of data analysis and use for a grade level team or department.  C4. Complete third cycle of teacher observation and feedback, including developing individual personal/professional growth plans for the following year C5. Develop full PD plan for school addressing whole faculty, teacher team, and individual needs	n/a

Note on other course changes:

- 6301 will no longer be a requirement
- 6707 (education measurement, not the new 6707 described above) will no longer be a requirement

Note. From “Redesigning principal preparation: A work in progress at the University of Missouri St. Louis (UMSL)”, by M. Kelemen and B. Fenton, 2016, New Leaders, pp. 26-28. Copyright 2016 by New Leaders. Reprinted with permission.

## APPENDIX B:

**Table 2A: NOVA SCOTIA INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM**

ILP curriculum	Critical content	Three-year course schedule
<p>ILP 1 Best practices in instruction and assessment, Part I</p>	<p>Course content will include: developing an understanding of how the brain processes information; theories and principles of learning; learning styles and preferences; motivation; multiple intelligences; barriers to learning and their implications for teaching and learning; student engagement concepts and strategies; vocabulary development and concept attainment; skills and approaches for constructing understanding; literacy development across content areas; research-based instructional strategies; and how these methods connect to current learning theory.</p>	<p>Year 1: September–December</p>
<p>ILP 2 Best practices in instruction and assessment, Part II</p>	<p>Building on ILP 1, course content will include: formative (assessment for) and summative (assessment of) learning; assessment research and strategies related to effective grading practices and evaluation; how to develop a balanced assessment system; and staying focused on the learner and the learning.</p>	<p>Year 1: January–April</p>
<p>ILP 3 Coaching for instructional improvement</p>	<p>ILP 3 is a blended learning experience that includes coursework, laboratories/workshops, and practicums. A distinctive element of the Nova Scotia Instructional Leadership Program is the Skillful Observational Coaching Laboratory™ workshops and the Artisan Teacher™ institute intended to help instructional leaders learn to use descriptive and specific feedback for teachers focused on their teaching talents. Participants will learn and become proficient at four coaching techniques practiced in a school setting. Practicums include practice using coaching tools, the completion of learning logs, and reflections on the coaching process. The curriculum focuses on best practice, theory, and research. ILP 3 is introduced in the two-day Artisan Teacher™ institute, scheduled for August (Year 2). This institute is held in the Halifax-Dartmouth area.</p>	<p>Year 2: September–January</p>

UEPL 14(1) 2019

MacKinnon, Young,  
Paish, & LeBel

Preparing  
Instructional  
Leaders



**TABLE 2A: CONTINUED**

<p>ILP 4 Instructional design: culturally responsive teaching and leadership</p>	<p>Course content includes a focus on culturally responsive instructional design, teaching strategies, and leadership practices. The course will examine the big ideas, essential questions, and unifying concepts in instructional design from the perspective of the culturally proficient instructional leader and teacher. It will also include an examination of effective practices for community building in the classroom and the school, lesson and unit planning through a culturally responsive and inclusive lens, and positive classroom management strategies.</p>	<p>Year 2: January–April</p>
<p>ILP 5 Using data for instructional and school improvement</p>	<p>Building on the first four courses, participants will learn how to collect different kinds of data using multiple data sources, how to organize and disaggregate data, how to analyze data for instructional themes and patterns. They will present and communicate data findings, use data to influence instructional changes, and lead data-driven discussions for improving instruction.</p>	<p>Year 3: September–December</p>

**Appendix A: (continued)**

ILP curriculum	Critical content	Three-year course schedule
<p>ILP 6 Developing a community of practice</p>	<p>Course content will focus on understanding the characteristics and components of professional learning communities (PLCs) and collaborative learning teams (CLTs); developing strategies for initiating, moving, and sustaining PLCs and CLTs; developing strategies for teacher learning (study groups, peer visitation, coaching, action research, networks); and developing learning plans for the school. The course will also include knowledge and skill building related to culture shaping and leadership factors that help to build professional learning communities.</p>	<p>Year 3: January–April</p>
<p>Final culminating assessment</p>	<p>Participants will be expected to demonstrate knowledge, skills, and competencies acquired from the six courses, their practicum experiences, coaching experiences, and their action research.</p>	<p>Year 3: April–May</p>

Source: The Leadership Academy: Instructional Leadership Program, Education Leadership Consortium of Nova Scotia Ltd., 2018

IEPL 14(1) 2019

MacKinnon, Young, Paish, & LeBel

Preparing Instructional Leaders

Note. From “Preparing instructional leaders: Evaluating a regional program to gauge perceived effectiveness”, by G. R. MacKinnon, D. Young, S. Paish, and S. LeBel, 2019, International Journal of Education Policy and Leadership, 14(1), pp. 16-17. Reprinted with Permission.

## APPENDIX C:

### EMAIL REQUEST SENT TO MOE FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT STUDY

**RAQUEL R. EDGECOMBE**

P. O. BOX EE-16348

Nassau, Bahamas

Tel. 242-361-7268/242-449-1692

Email: raquel.edgecombe@ub.edu.bs

December 2, 2020

Dr. Marcellus Taylor  
Director of Education  
Ministry of Education  
P. O. Box N-3913/4  
Nassau, The Bahamas  
Dear Dr. Taylor:

RE: Permission to Conduct Research Study

I trust this letter finds you well. As you are aware, I am Raquel Edgecombe, Chairperson of the School of Education at The University of The Bahamas. I am also a doctoral candidate at the University of South Florida. I am pursuing a degree in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. I am in the final process of the dissertation phase writing on the topic, "Principal Preparation for The Bahamas: A Partnership Approach." The purpose of this study is to explore educational leadership practitioners' understandings of partnership in principal preparation. Further, it seeks to uncover educational leadership practitioners' perspectives of the ideal partnership arrangement to prepare principals for the Bahamas.

To this end, I am writing to request permission to conduct a research study with various educational leaders throughout the educational system. If approved, my participants will include the director of education, the head of professional development, two district superintendents, and current public-school principals from various levels of the school system. Principals will be

recruited from various islands throughout the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. A total of 12 principals will be selected to take part in two virtual focus groups.

As a qualitative research, I will conduct semi-structured interviews with each leader, and a focus group interviews with two groups of principals. Also note that in keeping with the Covid-19 safety protocols all interviews and the focus groups will be conducted via ZOOM. Further, anything that would identify the participants including their names and school will be kept confidential and used as pseudonyms in the study.

Provided that you grant me with your consent, I would need an official letter stating the same. This letter will be needed for the IRB Protection of Human Subjects to continue my research. Please email the letter to [raquel.edgecombe@ub.edu.bs](mailto:raquel.edgecombe@ub.edu.bs). Should you have any concerns or queries, please call me at (242) 449-1692 or (242) 361-7268. Thank you for your kind consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

*Raquel R. Edgecombe*

Raquel Edgecombe

Doctoral Candidate

Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

**APPENDIX D:**

**CONSENT LETTER FROM MOE TO CONDUCT STUDY**



**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
P. O. BOX N- 3913 NASSAU, N.P., THE BAHAMAS  
Tel: (242) 502-2700 Fax: (242) 322-8491 / 328-8970

---

Mrs. Raquel Edgecombe  
Nassau, N.P., The Bahamas

Your Reference: Research Study  
Our Reference: EDU/A/2058

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Dear Mrs. Edgecombe

**RE: Research Study - "Principal Preparation for The Bahamas: A Partnership Approach"**

Approval has been granted by the Department of Education for you to conduct a research study from February 1, 2021 to April 30, 2021 among key stakeholders in the education system. It is understood that participants will include the Director of Education, the head of professional development, two district superintendents, and current public-school principals from various levels of the school system across several islands. It is further understood that you will conduct virtual focus group interviews with participants identified in your submitted research proposal once you would have gained their permission.

The Department of Education notes that precautions will be taken to safeguard the data collected and the privacy of the individuals participating in the study will not be violated. The Department looks forward to receiving a final report of your findings. A copy should be made available to the Office of the Director of Education and a presentation made to relevant technical officers of the Department.

Please feel free to contact Assistant Director Sharmaine Sinclair discuss any concerns and/or challenges regarding the terms set out in this letter.  
The telephone contact for ADE Sinclair is 502-8213 and her email address is [sharmaine.sinclair@moe.edu.bs](mailto:sharmaine.sinclair@moe.edu.bs)


Sincerely

Handwritten signature of M.C. Taylor in black ink.

M.C. Taylor  
Director

**APPENDIX E:**

**COMPLETION OF CITI PROGRAM COURSE**



**CITI PROGRAM**

Completion Date 10-Jun-2020  
Expiration Date 10-Jun-2023  
Record ID 22695149

This is to certify that:

**Raquel Edgecombe**

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

**Human Research 2  
VA Human Subjects Protection and Good Clinical  
Practices  
1 - Basic Course**

(Curriculum Group)  
(Course Learner Group)  
(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

**University of South Florida**

Not valid for renewal of certification through CME. Do not use for TransCelerate mutual recognition (see Completion Report).

**CITI**  
Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

Verify at [www.citiprogram.org/verify/?wf9638354-5bd9-4ead-9d24-5f1cf914670a-22695149](http://www.citiprogram.org/verify/?wf9638354-5bd9-4ead-9d24-5f1cf914670a-22695149)

**COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)**  
**COMPLETION REPORT - PART 2 OF 2**  
**COURSEWORK TRANSCRIPT\*\***

\*\* NOTE: Scores on this [Transcript Report](#) reflect the most current quiz completions, including quizzes on optional (supplemental) elements of the course. See list below for details. See separate Requirements Report for the reported scores at the time all requirements for the course were met.

- **Name:** Raquel Edgecombe (ID: 6247482)
- **Institution Affiliation:** University of South Florida (ID: 425)
- **Institution Email:** redgecombe@usf.edu
- **Phone:** 2424491692
  
- **Curriculum Group:** Human Research 2
- **Course Learner Group:** VA Human Subjects Protection and Good Clinical Practices
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course
  
- **Record ID:** 22695149
- **Report Date:** 10-Jun-2020
- **Current Score\*\*:** 98

REQUIRED, ELECTIVE, AND SUPPLEMENTAL MODULES	MOST RECENT SCORE	
Basic Institutional Review Board (IRB) Regulations and Review Process (ID: 2)	08-Jun-2020	5/5 (100%)
Informed Consent (ID: 3)	09-Jun-2020	5/5 (100%)
Social and Behavioral Research (SBR) for Biomedical Researchers (ID: 4)	09-Jun-2020	4/4 (100%)
Records-Based Research (ID: 5)	09-Jun-2020	3/3 (100%)
Good Research Practices for Protection of Human Subjects, Module 3: Good Clinical Practice and VA Research (ID: 845)	10-Jun-2020	4/4 (100%)
Genetic Research in Human Populations (ID: 6)	09-Jun-2020	5/5 (100%)
Good Research Practices for Protection of Human Subjects, Module 5: Monitoring Subject Safety (ID: 847)	10-Jun-2020	5/5 (100%)
Good Research Practices for Protection of Human Subjects, Module 6: Records and Reports (ID: 849)	10-Jun-2020	4/4 (100%)
Good Research Practices for Protection of Human Subjects, Module 7: Managing Investigational Products (ID: 850)	10-Jun-2020	4/4 (100%)
FDA-Regulated Research (ID: 12)	10-Jun-2020	5/5 (100%)
Good Research Practices for Protection of Human Subjects, Module 8: Patient Privacy and Confidentiality (ID: 848)	10-Jun-2020	4/4 (100%)
History and Ethics of Human Subjects Research (ID: 498)	08-Jun-2020	5/5 (100%)
Populations in Research Requiring Additional Considerations and/or Protections (ID: 16680)	09-Jun-2020	5/5 (100%)
Conflicts of Interest in Human Subjects Research (ID: 17464)	10-Jun-2020	4/5 (80%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

Verify at: [www.citiprogram.org/verify/?k4ccd228f-6fe7-4c3b-97e2-6d37a726c7a6-22695149](http://www.citiprogram.org/verify/?k4ccd228f-6fe7-4c3b-97e2-6d37a726c7a6-22695149)

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program)  
 Email: [support@citiprogram.org](mailto:support@citiprogram.org)  
 Phone: 888-529-5929  
 Web: <https://www.citiprogram.org>

APPENDIX F:

INTERNAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) APPROVAL FORM



EXEMPT DETERMINATION

January 11, 2021

Raquel Edgecombe  
113 South Sherrill Street  
Tampa, FL 33609

Dear Mrs. Raquel Edgecombe:

On 1/9/2021, the IRB reviewed and approved the following protocol:

Application Type:	Initial Study
IRB ID:	STUDY001931
Review Type:	Exempt 2
Title:	Principal Preparation for The Bahamas: A Partnership Approach
Protocol:	- R. Edgecombe IRB Protocol.docx

The IRB determined that this protocol meets the criteria for exemption from IRB review.

In conducting this protocol, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

Please note, as per USF policy, once the exempt determination is made, the application is closed in BullsIRB. This does not limit your ability to conduct the research. Any proposed or anticipated change to the study design that was previously declared exempt from IRB oversight must be submitted to the IRB as a new study prior to initiation of the change. However, administrative changes, including changes in research personnel, do not warrant a modification or new application.

Ongoing IRB review and approval by this organization is not required. This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these activities impact the exempt determination, please submit a new request to the IRB for a determination.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Walker  
IRB Research Compliance Administrator

---

Institutional Review Boards / Research Integrity & Compliance  
FWA No. 00001669  
University of South Florida / 3702 Spectrum Blvd., Suite 165 / Tampa, FL 33612 / 813-974-5638

Page 1 of 1

## **APPENDIX G:**

### **INTERVIEW PROTOCOL #1**

#### Interview Questions for MOE and UB Stakeholders

1. Please describe your professional and academic background?  
  
Sub-questions- Have you been a school administrator? If so, in what positions, and for how long and when?
2. Describe your experience in past partnerships?
3. In what ways were they successful?
4. In what ways were they challenged?
5. How can these challenges be avoided in future partnerships?
6. What is your understanding of a university- MOE/ UB-MOE partnership to prepare school principals?
7. What should the pre-requisites for such a partnership be? i.e. trust, equity, agreed upon goals
8. What might be some of the benefits of the partnership?
9. What might be some of the challenges of the partnership? **OR** What factors do you perceive can hinder the development, implementation, and/or sustainability of the partnership?
10. How can these challenges/hindrances be avoided or overcome?
11. Who should be a part of the partnership and why?



12. In what way should they be a part of the partnership? What should their roles be? e.g. in program design, curriculum review, recruitment, mentorship, and teaching of courses (also internship).
13. What is your vision for the structure of the preparation program for principals? What might your role be in this process? e.g. Administrative/Leadership certificate; Diploma/Certificate, Masters Degree.
14. What are your hopes for the partnership in the future?
15. Are there any other aspects about the partnership I didn't ask about that you would like to share?

## **APPENDIX H:**

### **INTERVIEW PROTOCOL #2**

#### Focus Group Interview Questions for Principals

1. Kindly introduce yourself to the group. State how many years, you have served as a principal and where. State your academic background.
2. Describe your experience in past partnerships?
3. In what ways were they successful?
4. In what ways were they challenged?
5. How can these challenges be avoided in future partnerships?
6. What is your understanding of a university- MOE/ UB-MOE partnership to prepare school principals?
7. What should the pre-requisites for such a partnership be? i.e. trust, equity, agreed upon goals
8. What might be some of the benefits of the partnership?
9. What might be some of the challenges of the partnership? **OR** What factors do you perceive can hinder the development, implementation, and/or sustainability of the partnership?
10. How can these challenges/hindrances be avoided or overcome?
11. Who should be a part of the partnership and why?

12. In what way should they be a part of the partnership? What should their roles be? i.e. in program design, curriculum review, recruitment, mentorship, and teaching of courses (also internship).  
Specifically, what role should principals play in this process?
13. As a current principal, what should be your role/s in the partnership?
14. What is your vision for the structure of the preparation program for principals? What might your role be in this process? e.g. Administrative/Leadership certificate; Diploma/Certificate, Masters Degree.
15. What are your hopes for the partnership in the future?
16. Are there any other aspects about the partnership I didn't ask about that you would like to share?

**APPENDIX I:**  
**LETTER OF INVITATION TO PARTICIPANTS**

**RAQUEL R. EDGECOMBE**

P. O. BOX EE-16348

Nassau, Bahamas

Tel. 242-361-7268/242-449-1692

Email: redgecombe@usf.edu

December 28, 2020

Dear Potential Participant:

RE: Recruitment of Study Participant

I trust this letter finds you well. I am Raquel Edgecombe, a doctoral candidate at the University of South Florida. I am pursuing a degree in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. I am in the participant recruitment phase of my dissertation entitled, "Principal Preparation for The Bahamas: A Partnership Approach." The purpose of this study is to explore educational leadership practitioners' understandings of partnership in principal preparation. Further, it seeks to uncover educational leadership practitioners' perspectives of the ideal partnership arrangement to prepare principals for the Bahamas.

To this end, I am writing to determine your interest and suitability to participate in this study. Invited participants will include various educational leaders throughout the educational system, namely the director of education, the head of professional development, two district superintendents, and current public-school principals from various levels of the school system. Further, invited participants from the University of The Bahamas will include the dean of the faculty of social and educational studies, and the immediate past chairperson of the School of Education. Principals will be recruited from various islands throughout the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. A total of 12 principals will be selected to take part in two virtual focus groups.

As a qualitative research, I will conduct semi-structured interviews with each leader, and a focus group interviews with two groups of principals. Also note that in keeping with the Covid-19 safety protocols all interviews and the focus groups will be conducted via ZOOM. Further, anything that would identify the participants including their names and school will be kept confidential and used as pseudonyms in the study.

Provided that you reply to this letter stating that you are interested in participating in this study, and you meet the participant selection criteria, I will provide you with the participant consent document. Further, if you are a principal, please answer the following questions so that I may determine your suitability to participate in the study:

1. Which school are you the principal of?
2. How long have you served as principal of this school? Please include the start date.
3. How long have you been a principal? Please include the start date.
4. Did you complete the Diploma in Educational Leadership program at the College, now University of The Bahamas?

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Should you have any concerns or queries, please email me at [redgecombe@usf.edu](mailto:redgecombe@usf.edu) or call (242) 449-1692 or (242) 361-7268.

Sincerely,

*Raquel R. Edgcombe*

Raquel Edgcombe

Doctoral Candidate

Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

## APPENDIX J:

### INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH



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**Informed Consent to Participate in Research Involving Minimal Risk**  
**Information to Consider Before Taking Part in this Research Study**  
**Title: Principal Preparation for The Bahamas: A Partnership Approach**

Study # 001931

---

**Overview:** You are being asked to take part in a research study. The information in this document should help you to decide if you would like to participate. The sections in this Overview provide the basic information about the study. More detailed information is provided in the remainder of the document.

**Study Staff:** This study is being led by Raquel Edgecombe, the Principal Investigator. She is a PhD candidate in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at The University of South Florida.

**Study Details:** This study is being conducted in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. The purpose of the study is to explore your understanding of partnership in principal preparation. To this end, you are being asked to take part in a virtual interview via ZOOM for forty to sixty minutes. Further, if you are a school principal, you are being asked to take part in a virtual focus group interview for approximately ninety to one hundred twenty minutes.

**Subjects:** You are being asked to take part in this study because you are a key stakeholder in the preparation of principals, or you are a principal who has taken part in a Ministry of Education-University of The Bahamas (formerly College of The Bahamas) partnership preparation program.

**Voluntary Participation:** Your participation is voluntary. You do not have to participate and may stop your participation at any time. There will be no penalties or loss of benefits or opportunities if you do not participate or decide to stop once you start.

**Benefit, Compensation, and Risk:** Some participants would benefit as they could possibly be a part of the programs and professional development activities that this future partnership could produce. Others may even serve as mentors, and or professors of future participants of the program.

Further, there is no cost to participate. You will not be compensated for your participation. This research is considered minimal risk. Minimal risk means that study risks are the same as the risks you face in daily life.

**Confidentiality:** Even if I publish the findings from this study, I will keep your study information private and confidential. Anyone with the authority to look at your records must keep them confidential.

---

#### Why are you being asked to take part?

The purpose of this study is to explore how stakeholders understand the role of partnerships in the development of principal preparation programs. The literature has investigated partnerships in numerous ways; however, based on a review of the literature, no study has sought the insights of potential stakeholders about the ideal partnership. This study will add to the literature as it will seek the perspectives of partners prior to entering the partnership. It is hoped that these perspectives can be used

in the creation and implementation of the partnership. These perspectives might help to produce a stronger partnership and counteract some of the challenges of partnerships as outlined in the literature. To this end, you are being asked to take part in this study as you are a major stakeholders, and your input will provide useful insights for the creation and growth of the partnership.

### **Study Procedures:**

As a major stakeholder, you are being asked to take part in a virtual semi-structured interview which could last for approximately forty to sixty minutes. Further, principals are being asked to take part in a virtual focus group interview with five to seven other principals. The focus group interview should last for approximately one hundred twenty minutes. After the interviews have been transcribed, each participant will be asked to check the transcription for accuracy.

At the interview session you will be asked to:

- Answer general background questions about yourself, and answer open ended questions about past and future partnership arrangements to prepare principals for the Bahamian Educational System.
- Also note that all interviews will be recorded via ZOOM. Only the principal investigator and I will have access to the recording. Further, all recordings will be kept for five years and deleted after this time.

### **Total Number of Subjects**

About 18 to 22 individuals will take part in this study in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas

### **Alternatives / Voluntary Participation / Withdrawal**

You do not have to participate in this research study.

You should only take part in this study if you want to volunteer. You should not feel that there is any pressure to take part in the study. You are free to participate in this research or withdraw at any time. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits you are entitled to receive if you stop taking part in this study.

### **Benefits**

The potential benefits of participating in this research study include:

Some participants would benefit as they could possibly be a part of the programs and professional development activities that this future partnership could produce. Others may even serve as mentors, and or professors of future participants of the program.

Further, this study can revolutionize principal preparation in the Bahamas. The findings and recommendations produced could transform principal preparation in The Bahamas for years to come. Moreover, it could improve the quality of education in the Bahamas as the literature suggest that principals play a vital role in student success.

### **Risks or Discomfort**

This research is considered to be minimal risk. That means that the risks associated with this study are the same as what you face every day. There are no known additional risks to those who take part in this study.

### **Compensation**

You will receive no payment or other compensation for taking part in this study.

### **Costs**

It will not cost you anything to take part in the study.

### **Privacy and Confidentiality**

We will do our best to keep your records private and confidential. We cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. Your personal information may be disclosed if required by law. Certain people may need to see your study records. These individuals include:

- The research team, including the Principal Investigator.
- Certain government and university people who need to know more about the study. For example, individuals who provide oversight on this study may need to look at your records. This is done to make sure that we are doing the study in the right way. They also need to make sure that we are protecting your rights and your safety.
- The USF Institutional Review Board (IRB) and its related staff who have oversight responsibilities for this study, and staff in USF Research Integrity and Compliance.

#### *The following information may be used and disclosed to others:*

Please be advised that although the researchers will take every precaution to maintain confidentiality of the data, the nature of focus groups prevents the researchers from guaranteeing confidentiality. The researchers would like to remind you to respect the privacy of your fellow subjects and not repeat what is said in the focus group to others.

### **What if new information becomes available about the study?**

During the course of this study, we may find more information that could be important to you. This includes information that, once learned, might cause you to change your mind about being in this study. We will notify you as soon as possible if such information becomes available.

### **You can get the answers to your questions, concerns, or complaints.**

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this study, call Raquel Edgecombe at 242-449-1692. If you have questions about your rights, complaints, or issues as a person taking part in this study, call the USF IRB at (813) 974-5638 or contact by email at [RSCH-IRB@usf.edu](mailto:RSCH-IRB@usf.edu).

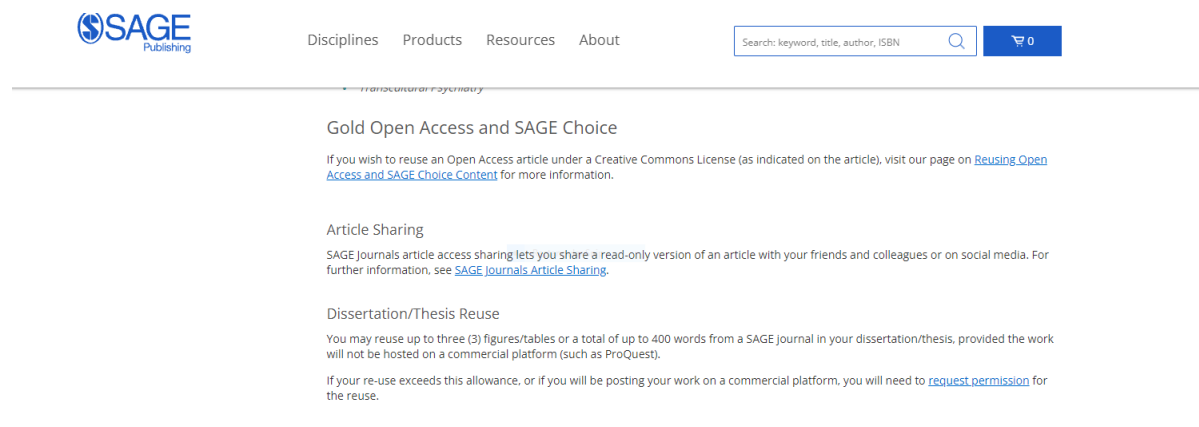


## APPENDIX K:

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Please find below the permission to use Figure 1: A Typology of Partnerships for Promoting Innovations on pages 18 and 94 of this dissertation, taken from page 23 of the following article:

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Kelemen, M., & Fenton, B. (2016). Redesigning principal preparation: A work in progress at the University of Missouri St. Louis (UMSL). *New Leaders*.

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Chief Administrative Officer & General Counsel

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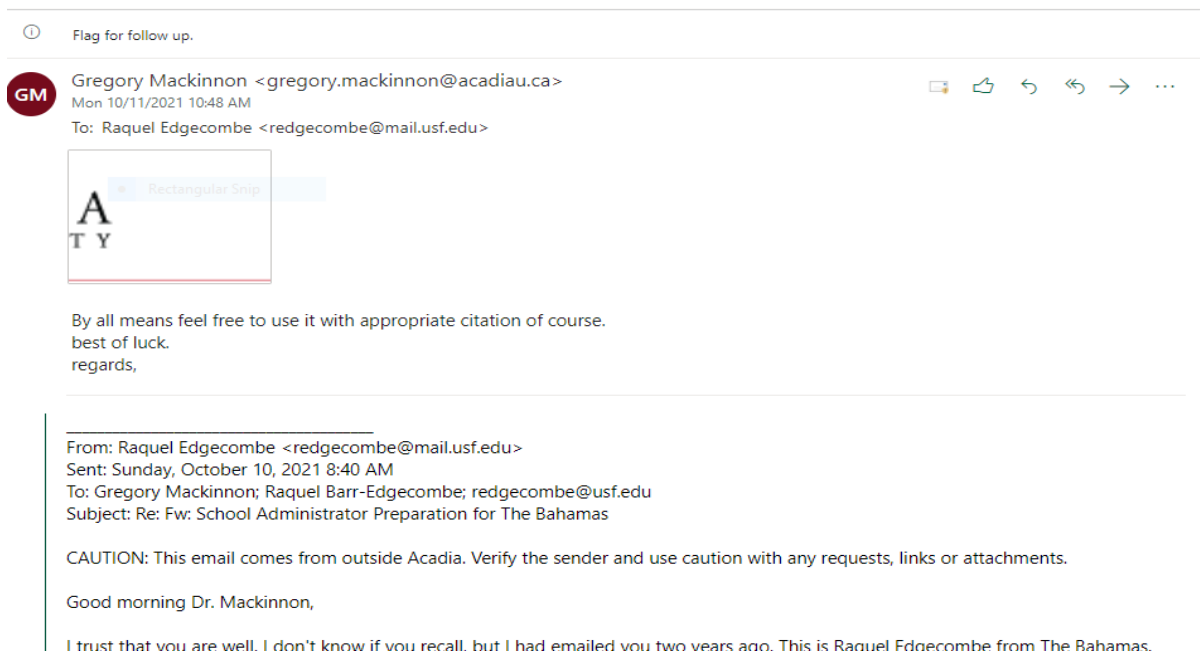
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MacKinnon, G. R., Young, D., Paish, S., & LeBel, S. (2019). Preparing instructional leaders: evaluating a regional program to gauge perceived effectiveness. *International Journal of Education Policy and Leadership*, 14(1), 1-20.



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regards,

✉ Rectangular Snip

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From: Raquel Edgecombe <redgecombe@mail.usf.edu>  
Sent: Sunday, October 10, 2021 8:40 AM  
To: Gregory Mackinnon; Raquel Barr-Edgecombe; redgecombe@usf.edu  
Subject: Re: Fw: School Administrator Preparation for The Bahamas

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Good morning Dr. Mackinnon,

I trust that you are well. I don't know if you recall, but I had emailed you two years ago. This is Raquel Edgecombe from The Bahamas. Please see thread below, if needed.

I am completing my dissertation this semester. To this end, I write to ask your permission to use the table of the Course content of the ILP in my dissertation. It is the Appendix A in the following article:

MacKinnon, G. R., Young, D., Paish, S., & LeBel, S. (2019). Preparing Instructional Leaders: Evaluating a Regional Program to Gauge Perceived Effectiveness. *International Journal of Education Policy and Leadership*, 14(1), n1.

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